

ECHO IRELAND

IRISH RADIO TRANSMITTERS SOCIETY



Autumn 2020 Celebrating 88 Years

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South Dublin Radio Club

Dundalk Amateur Radio Club

Skywave Amateur Radio Club

Mayo VHF Group

Cork Radio Club

Galway Radio Experimenters Club

Limerick Radio Group

Irish Air Corps Amateur Radio Club

South Eastern Amateur Radio Group

Phoenix Amateur Radio Club

Howth Martello Radio Group

East Leinster Amateur Radio Club

Shannon Basin Radio Club

Kerry Amateur Radio Group

Avondhu Radio Club

Mayo Radio Experimenters Club

Dundalk Amateur Radio Club

Tipperary Amateur Radio Group

Westnet DX Group

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North Cork Radio Group

Kinsale Radio Club

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"Echo Ireland"**Journal of the IRTS**

The Irish radio Transmitters Society published quarterly. The Society also publishes EiNews monthly. Private advertisements from paid up members are free of charge.

Articles and event information for publication should be sent to *news-steam@irts.ie* as a word processing file attachment, **not as a PDF**. Images and illustrations should be embedded in the file *for position only*. Make sure to put captions for all images and illustrations at the end of the article, rather than embedded within the images of the main text of your article.

Please include the full names and call signs of people included in photos and where necessary obtain their permission.

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Winter copy deadline - November 30th

EiNews Appeal

EiNews is an ideal channel in which to publicise for clubs. It includes Echo Ireland, the weekly radio News and requires input from members to be successful. Please share information about past and future events or achievements with other members by emailing short pieces, with photographs and links, to *newsteam@irts.ie*.

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Calling All Clubs



Dear fellow members,

You may well be wondering about the front cover of the autumn edition of Echo Ireland.

Well, Echo Ireland believes that it is time for all affiliated clubs to tell their story. Echo Ireland is inviting all the affiliated clubs to tell our readership about themselves – when and how your club was formed, its members, activities, anecdotes and how you continue to sustain your existence.

Through the pages of Echo Ireland members will be familiar with some of the larger clubs. Echo Ireland would particularly love to hear about the smaller and less publicised clubs as well.

Whether you meet regularly at the same venue or whether you meet occasionally in each other's homes your stories are worthwhile telling and recording. Starting with the autumn 2020 edition Echo Ireland is featuring the Dundalk Amateur Radio Club. Each future edition will feature a different club.

So, please get pen to paper and show your pride for your club. Tell us your story!

Jim Holohan EI4HH.

President, IRTS.



Licence Examination Board Update

Jim Holohan EI4HH



After many years of sterling service to the Society the remaining original members of the Licence Examination Board have decided to step down and hand over the reins to a new and enthusiastic group of volunteers.

Joe Ryan EI7GY, Séamus McCague EI8BP and Seán Donelan EI4GK undertook a mountain of work and responsibility during their long term of office and every credit is due to them for bringing the question pool, examination papers, conduct and management of the whole process to such a high standard.

While Joe, Séamus and Seán are relinquishing their positions on the Examination Board they will continue to beaver away as ever in the background for the benefit of the Society and our members.

It might be timely at this point to recall how the IRTS became involved with the “setting, organising and correcting for the examination for the Radio Experimenter’s Licence”. The IRTS took over the responsibility for the Radio Experimenters Licence on 26th May 2005. The commented text and photographs below are from the Echo Ireland magazine of May/June 2005.

“A forty page document was prepared by a team led by Sean Nolan EI7CD which set out in detail how IRTS would approach the Theory Examination were it granted the franchise to run it. It included a multiple choice sample exam paper; papers in the traditional format – together with a marking scheme – for those candidates who had been waiting for over a year to sit an exam. It dealt with the mechanics of setting the papers, running the exam and marking the papers. It also demonstrated that IRTS had within its membership all the competencies necessary to undertake such a task.”



On 26th May 2005 a formal agreement between ComReg and IRTS was signed under which IRTS will undertake “the setting, organising and correcting of the examination for the Experimenter’s Licence” for an initial period of three years.

Pictured (seated) Sean Donelan EI4GK President IRTS, Isolde Goggin Chairperson of the Commission for Communications Regulation and Joe Ryan EI7GY IRTS. Standing L. to R. - Dan Lloyd EI3AE, Paul O’Kane EISDI and IRTS Vice-President Fr. Finbar Buckley EI1CS.



Pictured at the signing were Sean EI4GK, IRTS President, Isolde Goggin, Chairperson of the Commission for Communications Regulation and Joe EI7GY IRTS.

The IRTS negotiation team at the time consisted of Seán Nolan EI7CD, Joe Ryan EI7GY, Stephen O’Leary EI6JA and Seán Donelan EI4GK. The first examination under the auspices of the IRTS took place on 16th June 2005 and maintained the traditional essay -type format. This was to be the last examination to be held in this format. Henceforth, examinations would be a multiple-choice format. The latter format required the creation of a large question-pool and coincidentally it was decided to produce a licence examination course in CD format to aid potential candidates to prepare for the examination. Séamus McCague EI8BP and Seán Nolan EI7CD (SK) were the main developers behind this project. The CD course has been superseded by a web-based course again developed by Joe and Séamus.

The new Licence Examination Board members are Gerry Gervin EI8CC (Chair), Dermot Gleeson EI2GT and John Ronan EI7IG supported by a small group of volunteers.

The renewal of the Experimenter’s Licence Examination contract with ComReg is due in December 2021. This will be one of the major projects to be undertaken by the incoming examination board. No doubt, the ever-developing demands of the hobby may require a major review of the structure and delivery of the licence examination in the future. It is something that the Board is well aware of and more than competent to deliver.

Again, I would sincerely like to thank the outgoing Board for all its hard work and commitment in the past and heartily welcome the incoming Licence Examination Board to the services of the IRTS.

Jim Holohan, EI4HH.
President, IRTS.

The 23rd International Lighthouse/Lightship Weekend

News and Reports

EI2WRC



The South Eastern Amateur Radio Group activated Hook Lighthouse ILLW Ref: 0003 on Saturday & Sunday the 22nd & 23rd August 2020 as part of the 23rd International Lighthouse/Lightship weekend. Hook Lighthouse situated in the Hook Peninsula Co. Wexford is the oldest intact operational lighthouse in the world. A great weekend was had by the large amount of club members and visitors that attended over the duration of the event. This was the club's first major event for the year due to the Covid restrictions. Band conditions were good over the weekend and a large amount of QSO's were logged throughout



From Left to Right
Wayne EI7HKB, John EI8JA, John EI3HQB, Martin EI2HIB & Sean EI2HZB

Europe and some DX contacts as well into Australia, USA and Jamaica. Thanks to all who helped out and visited over the weekend. Hopefully we will have some more activations soon!

*Sean Byrne EI2HZB
PRO EI2WRC*

Items For Sale

For Sale FT2000

Fully working 100 Watt model with:

- Built in power supply all firmware updates installed.
- Complete with manual, hand mike, power lead and double boxed.

Can be seen on the Mayo Experimenters web site at ei7mre.org under the for sale section.

Asking €800 or nearest offer.
Contact Dominic Curtin EI9JS at :
ei9jsdominic@gmail.com
Mobile: 086 8941900

For Sale

- FRG 9600 VHF/UHF receiver with manual
- SP102 Yaesu speaker
- Microset SR100, 100 watt VHF linear
- Microset PT1012 PS
- Yaesu MD1 desk microphone
- Watson W-770 HB 2m/70cms magmount

Any reasonable offer secures.
Contact Gerry Gervin EI8CC at:
Mobile: 087 9611961

Galway Digital Repeater now Complete

News and Reports

Steve Wright EI5DD



On Saturday the 11th of July the fourth DMR Repeater, EI7LRD, was installed on site at Knockroe, Loughrea Co Galway. Steve, EI5DD, had the Repeater running on the bench for the previous week prior to installation. At 11:00am Aengus, EI4ABB and Steve loaded up the equipment destined for the Loughrea site. Following the drive to Loughrea, we met up with Des, EI5GT. After the equipment was unloaded, there was a trek to the top of the hill. Fortunately, the load was not too heavy and could be carried among three people.

This is the location at the top of the hill with the antenna already rigged some months beforehand. Our antenna was at the very top of the tower. Weather and the COVID-19 lockdown had prevented our travel to the site. Steve, EI5DD, was stuck in the UK for 3 months which delayed the installation further. Two possible dates were suggested but the weather conditions were poor so they were abandoned. Despite the cloud, as seen in the picture, the weather was turned out to be sunny and very warm.



Loughrea Repeater Site



Aengus EI4ABB tuning the cavity filters

The antennas were already installed and initial SWR checks revealed all was well. Aengus tuned the cavity filters into the antenna system to ensure that there was no desensing to the received signal. Whilst tuned into a perfect load at

ground level it is always wise to fine tune into the system on site as the impedance may vary and the notches maybe slightly off frequency. Aengus has this technique down to a fine art at this stage and the tuning was completed within 10 minutes. Aengus is an invaluable member of our team.

Whilst Aengus was finalising the Cavity tune up, Des was busy connecting up the remote power controller. This system was installed to allow the Repeaters to be switched on or off remotely as required. Once the power controller was installed it was possible to install the DM Repeater.

The 2 metre Fusion Repeater had been installed on site a few weeks earlier and there were good reports from many far-reaching areas such as Westport, Roscommon, Kinnegad, Mullingar, Kildare and South of Limerick. We were hoping that the 70cms would cover a good distance also.



Des EI5GT setting up the Remote Power controller & IP address for the Gateway



19" Rack

Our 70cm DMR Repeater fitted into The 19" rack perfectly along with the power supply and Procram Filters. The 2m fusion repeater is located at the bottom of the stack with it's cavity filters below. Next is the Hytera power supply and the Repeater above. The power controller sits above the Repeater and the Router above. Power was applied to the Repeater and the system booted up without any problems. It was

necessary to apply a few changes to the Repeater's internal Programming to ensure that there was connection to the Brandmeister DMR Server.

News and Reports

Adjustment of all parameters is possible via a programming lead. A final check of everything before turning up the power to 40 Watts and this concluded the installation.



Steve EI5DD programming last minute adjustments to the Repeater Software prior to switch on



View towards Clifden

View towards Mayo

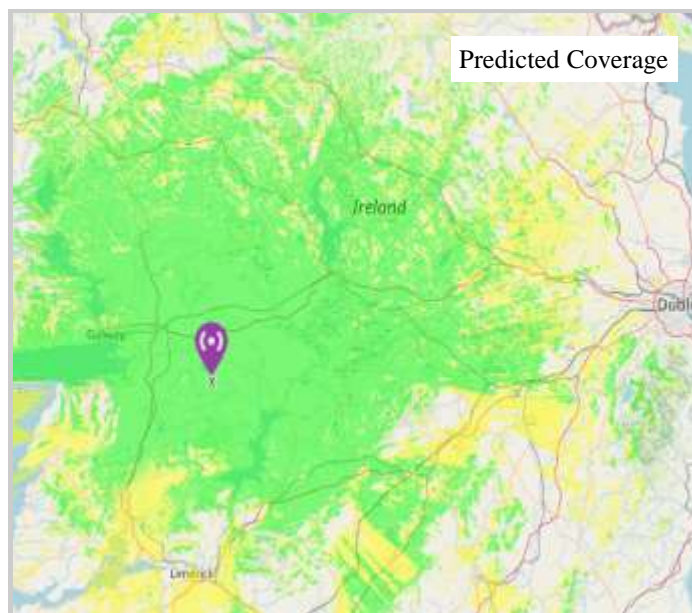


View towards the East, note the very flat terrain

A quick peek at the SYSOP's dashboard on the Brandmeister network below showed that all Galway devices were now connected. The Green Circle shows that everything is connected and the little green plug symbols to the left indicate the individual item that is registering on the Brandmeister Server.



Looking up towards the antenna system



Predicted Coverage

My Repeaters

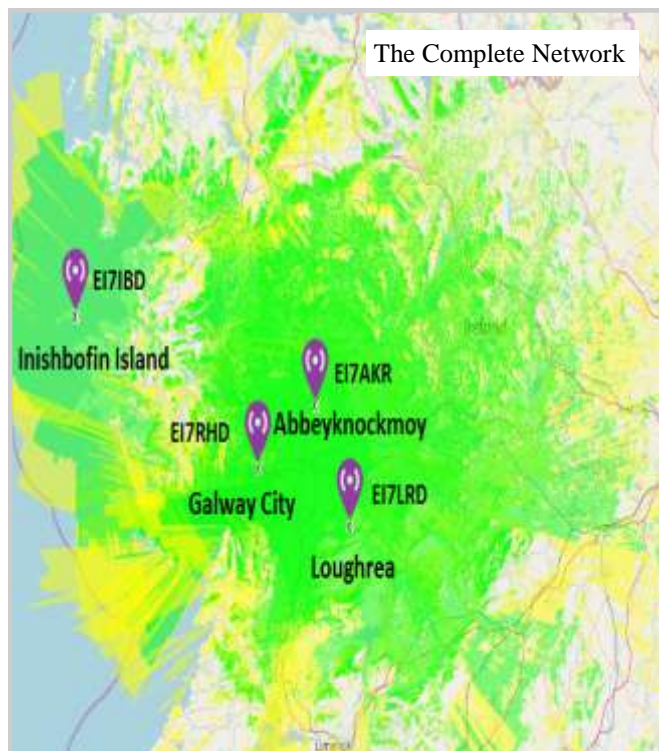
ID	Callsign	Hardware	Firmware	City	Actions
272011	EI7LRD Galway	Hytera RD985	A9.00.10.100.IM		View Settings
272010	EJ7IBD INISHOFIN	Hytera RD985	A9.00.10.100.IM	Inishbofin Island	View Settings
272006	EI7RHD	Hytera RD985	A9.00.10.100.IM	Galway City IO53LG	View Settings
272003	EI2GCD	MMDVM (Hotspot)	20181107_Pi-Star	Galway City IO53LG	View Settings
272012	EI2BED	MMDVM (Hotspot)	20200615_Pi-Star_v4	Ballybride, Co Rosco	View Settings
272009	EI7AKR	Hytera RD985	A9.00.10.100.IM	Abbeyknockmoy, Co. Galway	View Settings

The sysop Dashboard showing all was well

Online repeaters



News and Reports



Combining the Coverage of the entire Galway Network, it can be seen that we will have achieved a good wide area from a mobile operator's perspective. Base operators, from distant locations, may find a way into the system. To date the Map seems to be a pretty accurate representation of our coverage. Mobile operation would be very much as shown on the map. Handheld operation is good in Galway City and Salthill areas although, as with any repeater good signals will tend to be more line of sight for handheld operation.

The map above shows the Galway and the Waterford DMR facilities. Dundalk may have a Multi-mode Digital Repeater shortly and it is possible that the Cork Area will also be covered with an additional Repeater from the Southern Ireland Repeater Group. Roaming can be set up on commercial radios and on the Anytone 578 series radios. It is possible to move seamlessly from one coverage area to another with the radio automatically selecting the repeater with the best signal strength.

We invite all operators in the catchment area to use the facilities. The IRTS News is read on the local Galway Cluster, TG8 and those outside of the area can access via TG 27255.

We are confident that this Network will serve us well and look forward to the activity it will bring to the Galway area. Special thanks to all involved in the

set-up of the network, the guys that put up the antennas, and the site owners for giving us the use of their facilities.

Many said that Digital Radio was going nowhere in Ireland - at this stage we have proven them wrong many times over!



Steve Wright EI5DD

IRTS Shop

IRTS Members can avail of a 10% discount on purchases from the RSGB on-line shop - rsgbshop.org. Members should select the "Non-member's Price" before placing the order and then enter the IRTS Discount Code during the checkout process. At this point the discount will be applied.

IRTS members who are also RSGB members should continue to select the "RSGB Member's Price" and not use the IRTS Discount Code. The current IRTS Discount Code is IRTS2020XWW—it will change from time to time. www.rsgbshop.org



Last December 4th, 2019, the Dundalk Amateur Radio Society hosted a gathering of people, including current members, but more importantly, many past members of the club. We always have our Christmas soiree at Marconi House in early December, where members bring along items of food and drink to share, as well as having a selection of hot food from a local chipper to allow the construction of the now infamous 2JD Chip Butties!

This gathering was different; in addition to our annual Christmas get-together, we had decided to celebrate and recognise the fact that 2019 was the 50th anniversary of the establishment of our club. The fact that the club has been in continuous existence since 1969 was certainly noteworthy, hence the word was spread to past members and to local dignitaries to join with us to mark the occasion.

We didn't really know who would arrive on the night, as it was not meant to be one of those very formal occasions, but rather a reunion of some old friends. As it turned out, it was a night to be remembered in so many ways. It was lovely to see that some original members of the club took the time to join us, as well as local councillors who had supported the club both by deed and financially through councillor allocation funds.

In addition to our local contingent, we had the honour of a visit on the night from Jim Holohan EI4HH in his official capacity as the IRTS President. Jim gave a great speech which was very well received by all. Representing the Louth County Council were Cllr. John McGahon (now Senator) and Cllr. Marianne Butler. One of the founding members of the club, Jim Bellew EI4BX was in attendance and gave a wonderful witty speech detailing the origin of the club back in April/May 1969.

Unfortunately, some years ago, valuable club documentation was lost following a break-in to a car, so items of the club's history have had to be gleaned from other sources, word of mouth and from valuable archive material such as the collection of Echo Ireland publications from the IRTS web site. The club has had a few homes in or around the Dundalk area since its founding. Prior to the current home at Marconi House, 112 Castletown Road, various other locations were used, such as the Old Hospital at The Crescent, and the business premises of EI4BX while the current club house was being refurbished. The Dundalk Amateur Radio Society is unique in the country as we are lucky enough to possess a building solely for our use only.

Many people have visited our humble abode over the years, the most recent influx of visitors, aside from the 50th celebrations, happened in 2017 following our hosting of the IRTS AGM in Dundalk. A general invitation was made to all in attendance to pop in to the club house on their way back to their respective destinations for a 'cup of tea or coffee and a slice of Gateaux' to help them on their journey!

As mentioned, the following information has been gathered from genuine sources. The history of the club began when Mickey EI3CE (son of Frank EI7I), Jim EI4BX and others were in Frank EI7I's shack one night in early 1969 when the decision was made to form a local club, as there were quite a few licensed Experimenters in the area. The first meeting of the Dundalk Amateur Radio Society was formally held on the evening of Wednesday, 4th June 1969 in McGrath's pub located in Anne Street, Dundalk. From the 24 people present for the meeting, Noel EI9AV took the chair, with Willie EI2I becoming Hon. Secretary & Treasurer, Robin EI2BK, John (SWL) and Michael (SWL) forming the rest of the committee. The honour of naming of the club was proposed by Jim EI4BX. The original annual subscriptions were decided upon to be £1 for Transmitting members, 10 shillings for non-Transmitting members over 16 and 5 shillings for non-Transmitting members under 16.

One of the annual highlights of the club since the beginning was the operation of the special event callsign EI0DMF and EI2DMF where the station was put on air to celebrate the annual Dundalk May Time Festival, a huge event locally.

The Dundalk Amateur Radio Society may be based in the smallest county in Ireland, but most certainly punches above its weight repeatedly. We always have a presence at national level with the IRTS, with our members being part of the IRTS committee, and even as President.



News and Reports

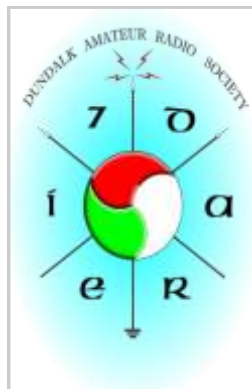
Over the years, we have won more than our fair share of trophies for national contests, hosted the IRTS AGM on a couple of occasions, involved heavily in the EI/GI Cross Border meetings traditionally held in the Ballymascanlon or the Fairways hotels, provided radio communications for events such as the cross border Maracycle and local running events, participated in the **EI13CLAN** contest and winning the 1st prize Icom IC-756 into the bargain. Thanks to the generosity of members and friends, we now have an extensive library of technical books as well as a rather large collection of digital books available for any of the members to read and use. Our members have contributed in almost every issue of Echo Ireland where, for some issues, it was predominantly Co. Louth contributions!



Members of the Dundalk Amateur Radio Society have had and still have an active participation in DXpeditions as part of the EIDX group to Nepal and Malawi. In the early 80's, we put on air the EI2CCR 2m repeater which is still operating from its high site at Clermont Carn in the north of the county and is still operational to this day, giving coverage from the northern shores of MI land down to the midlands of EI.

More recently, we put on air EI2MOG, a 2m EchoLink gateway and EI4FMG, a 4m gateway. In the last year or so, we put EI7DKD on air, covering all of County Louth (and a wee bit beyond!) with both DMR and analogue 70cms coverage. Our website at www.ei7dar.com is regularly updated with new information, as is our Facebook and Twitter pages.

When lock down was predicted during the COVID-19 outbreak, we immediately setup a bi-monthly Zoom meeting facility, first in the country to do so, just to enable our members to stay in contact, to share issues and to discuss any problems that we were having. On the alternative weeks that we had no Zoom meeting planned, we established a Net to operate on our 2m repeater **EI2CCR** which gave additional support to our members.



Our membership numbers average about 15, some years a great many more, some years the numbers dwindle, but there is always a core of dedicated members to steer the ship when needs be.

Our membership has consisted of people from all walks of life, different backgrounds and nationalities. At one stage there was a large contingent from MI

Land who were active members of the club. We are always welcoming to any new members; details of any planned meetings can be found on our web site. Perhaps our membership numbers correlate with the sunspot cycles? Who knows...?

*Brian Whelan EI8EJB
Secretary DARS*





Thankfully all our members are all safe and well and have so far avoided the “Virus”! We have had a couple of zoom meetings over the last few months and, despite a few problems, they were informative and interesting meetings with a lot of discussions on some members homebrew equipment, (We will give more details in the next edition hopefully) along with the usual topics such as antennas, rigs, FT8 etc.

Some members have invested in new rigs and or antennas and several demonstrations, hints and tips were given via the clubs Whatsapp group. Peter EI2IU, Tom EI4HCB, and Owen EI4GGB were a great help to existing and new members sharing their wealth of knowledge. Mark EI4HPB gave a detailed talk on his recently built Ubitx HF Rig.

The testers were busy with Mark, EI6JK, taking part in practically all the contests that took place over the past while. We will be preparing for the CQWW contests and hopefully Pat EI9HX can once again do us proud.

Fergus EI6IB and Brian EI8IU travelled up to Cairn Hill in August and operated during the clubs 2m net on 145.350. It was a great success with stations as far as Galway, Down, Dublin and Cork being logged using a 510x antenna and 50 watts from an Icom IC207. 4M was also used but unfortunately it wasn't as successful as 2M.



The Shannon Basin Radio Clubs 80m and 2m nets continue to be very popular and takes place on 3.720 +-qrm on Wednesday evenings at 20:00 and on 145.350 on Thursday evenings also at 20:00. The top band net will be starting in October and will be announced on the radio news.

Congratulations to John EI5INB who was successful in the recent exam.

The next online club meeting will take place on Friday 18th September at 20:00. Details will be sent via clubs WhatsApp group. Also see www.sbrc.ie and club facebook page for more information.



Contesting and Covid-19

Our CW and VHF/UHF Field Day contests for 2020 were cancelled, due to the public health measures then in place involving travel and other restrictions. SSB Field Day (first weekend in September) was also cancelled. Field day contests are primarily aimed at club or contest group participation: while the revised health measures announced in August might technically have permitted club participation in SSB Field Day, we took the view that groups from more than one household operating under typical field day conditions and sharing equipment could be risky.

The four Counties Contests scheduled for September and October will proceed as planned, however entries will only be accepted from single-operator stations or multi-operator stations where all operators are in the same family and live at the same location. If widespread travel restrictions are introduced, it may become necessary to remove the Portable sections from the 2m & 70cms contests.

VHF/UHF 2020 Contest, 4th / 5th July 2020

This was a replacement for VHF/UHF Field Day. It was, in effect, 5 separate contests, one each on the 5 bands (50 MHz to 1296 MHz) that are used in VHF/UHF Field Day, each contest lasting 2 – 3 hours, the time periods being aligned with a similar contest organised by the RSGB. Like the field day it replaced, distance-scoring was used. Stations in this contest could be fixed or portable, but only 3 stations chose to go portable which limited “local DX” opportunities.

16 ops submitted a total of 41 logs, showing 60 EI stations and 5 GI stations active on one or more of the bands. Propagation was disappointing, especially on Saturday. Sunday started well with some good results from 23cms, however by the time the 70cms contest got underway, conditions had deteriorated. The final contest on Sunday was the 2m event, which provided some reasonable openings and a brief appearance by a few continental European stations. Best DX of the 5 contests was by John EI2FG, working ON4KHG (842 km) on 144 MHz. John also managed 627 km on 1296 MHz (a considerable feat in my book!) working G3XDY.

IOTA Contest

This contest, at the end of July, was held under restricted rules: entries were only accepted from single operators using their home stations. Almost 2,500 logs were submitted, but just under a third of them were from islands. The necessary rule restrictions combined with relatively poor band conditions (plus a few hurricanes) resulted in low scores all round.

12 EI and 7 GI stations submitted logs and, as usual, we have listed their results on the Contest Results page of the IRTS web site: see www.irts.ie/iota20 for the details. Gerard EI5KF tops the list this year, achieving third place overall in the CW Assisted 12-hours High Power section. We also have to mention Peter MI5JYK who earned first place in the SSB Non-Assisted 24-hours QRP section. Peter is a well-known QRP enthusiast who operates with home brew wire antennas: his contest entry of 245 QSOs and 53 multipliers using just 5W clearly demonstrates just how effective QRP can be.

Contest Calendar

We have four Counties Contests coming up in September and October:

There has been a big increase in local activity on the bands over recent months, and many new licences issued, so I hope that this translates into more call signs appearing in the logs for these fun events!

Links

Contest rules & calendar: www.irts.ie/contests
 Contest results: www.irts.ie/results
 UKEICC contests www.ukaicc.com
 SD Contest Logger
 (free, and perfect for
 HF Counties Contests) www.ei5di.com

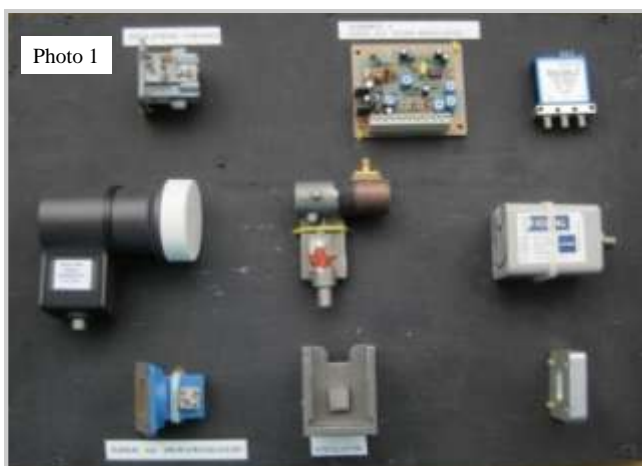
Band	Date	Start Time	Duration	Modes
70cm	Sun 13th Sep	2.00 pm local	30 mins	FM SSB
2m	Sun 13th Sep	2.30 pm local	90 mins	FM SSB
80m	Tue 6th Oct	19:00 UTC	1 hour	SSB CW
40m	Sun 11th Oct	12:00 UTC	1 hour	SSB CW



Hello and welcome to extract 050 of the HX Files. Featured in this extract is a 10 GHz 8mW (mille watts not mega watts) ATV transmitter that will be used for the testing of some satellite receivers and modified LNB's. I had a similar unit some time ago, but it had been used for parts in a couple of other projects over the years, a fact that came to light only after a few hours were spent looking for the tester and only finding a bag containing some parts, some brackets and cable so now I had this little project to do.

The Gathering

In photo 1 you can see a number of 10 GHz parts on a display board and some of these will be used in the outdoor end of the project; in the picture you can see the solfen head (the transmitter) on the top left, middle top, and to give it its full title Gunnmod 4 ATV Modulator.



In photo 2 some more parts, on the right the dome contains the camera that would be used, F Y I (for your information / or just being curious) the dome camera is sitting on the enclosure the solfen head came in.

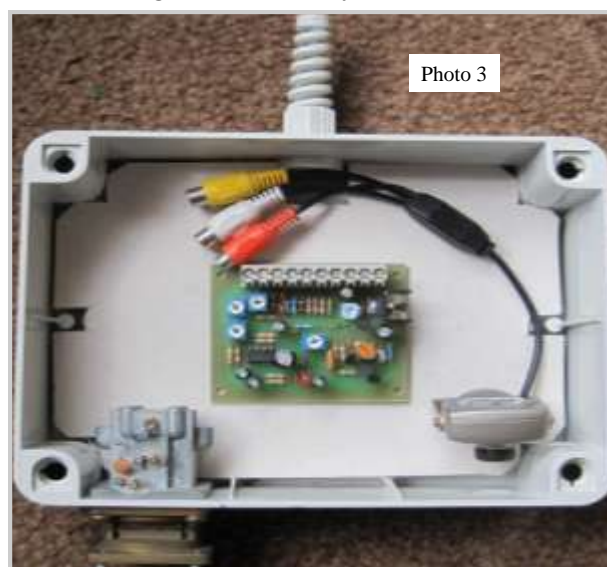


Those of you with a few grey hairs on their head might recognize them as they would have been the sensors that were in front of automatic doors that would detect a person heading into or out of the shop and send a signal to open it). I was told sometime ago that the ones used nowadays are of no use to us, the pile on the left of photo 2 contain the Modulator and the boxes contain the same Satellite LNB's as those on the display board.

Tool Time

After trying out a couple of different placements of the parts for the best fit it was then time for some drilling. In photo 3 you can see a cardboard template of a mounting board for the parts, the solfen head on the bottom left has treaded mounting holes in it and that was handy for securing it to the project box, the piece of brass that is on the outside of the box is a small piece of waveguide used as a joiner that could be used to attach a dish / aerial if it was to be used portable. It should be noted that to attach the solfen head to the box the box had five holes drilled in it, four for the mounting and as for the fifth one, some filing was done to it so the opening was widened out to 25mm X 15mm, a bit bigger than actual size of the waveguide opening of 19.05 mm X 9.525 mm. In between the two parts is a piece of plastic membrane that will keep the weather out.

On the bottom right of photo 3 can be seen the camera, it has night vision and sound; the fittings on the end of the camera's lead would be removed and screwed directly to the board. There would be no LED lights for power or TX/RX used in this project as I did not want to draw attention to it, not that it would be hidden as the neighbours are well use to the "mad yokes" in the garden over the years.



Regular Features

About the board

The design of the modulator board has all the connections you need and with the row of screw connectors there is no need for any soldering, you connect 11-16v DC to it then there are other connection spots for the solfen head 5-9v DC, and the audio / video from the camera, the power for the board and camera were connected to the input connection points via a fuse holder. In a straight line the transmitter would be 50 ft (16.5m) from the shack when running the DC cable along walls, sheds and fence to power everything up there would be a few more metres added to the length of power cable needed for the job, I had enough red and black cable for the job but that would only leave a couple of metres of cable left in stock, then I had a brainwave (or a touch of meanness if you like) I would use some satellite coaxial cable instead, after all there would be less than .75 of an amp of power needed for everything and sure isn't the great outdoors what that coaxial cable was made for.



In photo 4 you can see the transmitter in place, with the project attached to the fence and pointing parallel to the shack as it would be better to get a weaker signal to test the analogue satellite receivers and the different LNB's seen in photo 1 and not nuking myself.

In photo 5 you can see the test card, part of a garden dividing wall. the picture was taken direct from the TV, the picture is not as bright as it should be as I have put a piece of Perspex from an old number plate in front of the camera, and it will be okay until I get a piece of glass and replace the plastic.



In use

As mentioned earlier there were no marker lights used in this project, so when I am going to use the transmitter the DC power is connected and the satellite receiver and TV switched on and hopefully there is a picture (high tech or not). A small length of red and black cable was added to the coaxial dc cable for easier connecting to the power supply. In the shack to receive the signal a converted LNB is connected to a Satellite receiver via a short length of coaxial cable, around 2 metres, and I only have to lay the LNB on the windowsill inside to pick up the signal, the glass can act as an attenuator due to some metallic alloys used in the manufacturing of glass. The pictures received at night are a P 4 as when the night vision kicks in the light shows some of the inside of the project box and a some shadow outside, but there nothing wrong with the sound, as I can hear the Dogs and Cats around the neighbourhood, I have also seen giant birds and spiders, well they look huge when they are up close to the camera.

That is it for this issue of the HX Files.

Stay safe, take care, and wear a mask and may all your signals be P5.

73.

Pat.

Publications Library

Members are reminded that the IRTS web site has a Publications Library, where scanned copies in PDF format of old IRTS publications, principally newsletters, as far back as 1948 are available. This Library forms an important digital record of past society activities.

We encourage members to search for old IRTS publications that are not already on the site and send them to Joe EI7GY for scanning.



Hello again folks and welcome to the latest edition of HF Happenings. Apologies as this will be short and sweet as I was absent from all things radio for approximately 5 weeks with a home project. The summer has born fruit on many HF bands as good openings to Asia from just after sunup to pretty much most of the daylight hours. DX was worked from early to mid morning by EI stations as far away as New Caledonia, Australia, New Zealand, Hawaii etc. Longer openings are now starting to kick in as we appear to be turning a corner and lifting out of solar minimum. There is a lot of internet debate regarding the next sunspot cycle with differing opinions. The best we can do is get on the radio and see what is available.

I pretty much left the Sotabeams WSPRlite 200mW beacon with the Cobwebb multiband antenna on the workhorse 20m band for the last few months occasionally stopping the survey to give the antenna some more air time. Folks, I can't stress how good this homebrew 8 foot square no frills folded dipole is on the bands. No it is not a 3 element Steppir at 20m but it is an underestimated, low profile, easy to construct, (relatively cheap) "omni directional" HF antenna which is easy to deploy and works extremely well at 20-30 feet. I know that Keith EI5KO reddens the Ionosphere with 100 watts max and has well over 200 DXCC's worked. Hugh EI2HI and many others have huge success with 100 watts on the infamous Hexbeam as I can still recall last summer looking for EI from my brothers home outside Philadelphia when Hugh burst through a pileup barefoot on the Hexbeam.

"Like it or lump it" – hands down, FT8 is undoubtedly King of the bands particularly over the last few months of the dreaded C-19. Among its biggest advantages is a shorter transmit-receive cycle, meaning quicker contacts. FT8 offers "sensitivity down to -20 dB and beyond." Contacts are four times faster than with JT65 or JT9, and an entire FT8 contact can take place in about 1 minute.

The new mode is named after its developers, Steven Franke, K9AN, and Joe Taylor, K1JT. The numeral designates the mode's 8-frequency shift keying format. Tones are spaced at 6.25 Hz, and an FT8 signal occupies just 50 Hz. Unlike JT65 or JT9, transmit and receive cycles in FT8 each last about 15 seconds. Like JT65, FT8 requires accurate time synchronization so it is advisable to download a time synchronization program such as Dimension 4. FT8 is

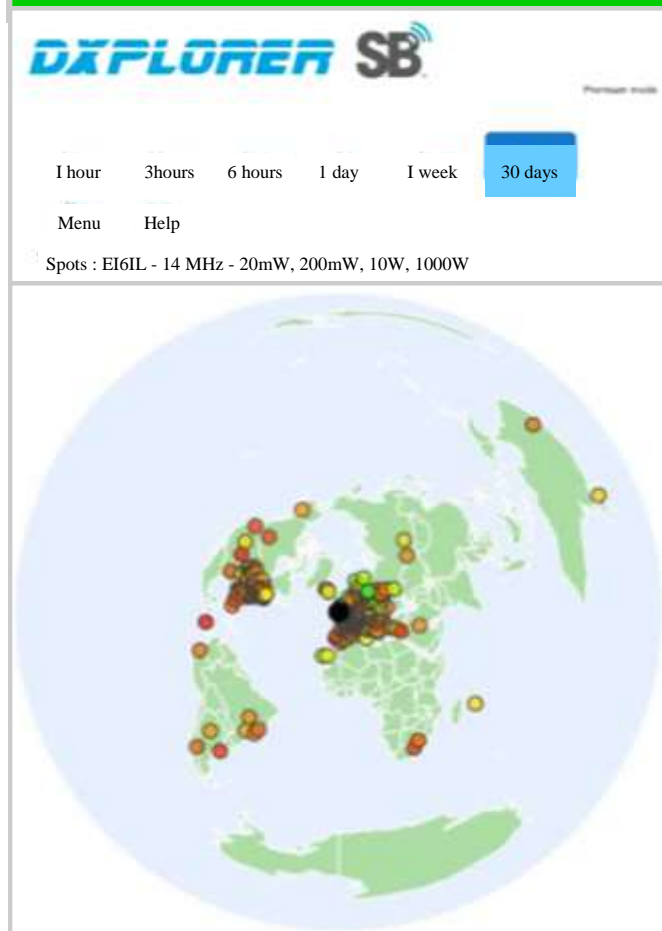
an excellent mode for HF DXing and for situations like multi-hop Es on 6 meters, where deep QSB may make fast and reliable completion of QSOs desirable".

I now see previously anti FT8 operators dabbling around the bands. I see sometimes no activity on some of the higher bands apart from FT8. Everyone is entitled to their own personal view but in my opinion it has brought more folks into the hobby. There is nothing really new with FT8 except improved algorithm which allows one to make a short "digital contact". RTTY has been about for years without much fuss. It is basically an operator's choice so, I say, each to their own. I dabbled for a while and now migrated back to CW as the eyesight deteriorates !!. Last year Norbert VK0AI was the only active station from Macquarie Island in years using only FT8. He only used 50 watts with a fishing pole antenna. I am now stuck on 330 confirmed DXCC's as new entities are as rare as supporters at GAA matches !! I needed Macquarie Island one of the remotest Islands on the planet for an ATNO (all time new one) so I and others dug the heels in and studied propagation, what he had for dinner, what time he hit the hay, his work/leisure (time on radio) schedule and hunted him down until he was in the 30m FT8 log. The way things are going it was probably my one and only shot at getting Macquarie in the log so I wasn't prepared to let it go because it was FT8. Yes, it would be a bonus to get Macquarie on CW someday but beggars can't be choosers.

WSPR or Whisper implements a protocol designed for probing potential propagation paths with low-power transmissions. Transmissions carry a station's callsign, Maidenhead grid locator, and transmitter power in dBm. The program can decode signals with S/N as low as -34 dB in a 2500 Hz bandwidth. Stations with internet access can automatically upload their reception reports to a central database called WSPRnet, which includes a mapping facility.

The next screen capture shows the performance of my WSPRlite (Weak Signal Propagation Reporter) beacon transmitting a 200mW signal through the Cobwebb Antenna over the month of August. As one can see, this really low power transmission was heard all over the planet. On further analysis of the stats, it was noticed that the openings to the DX locations are now longer.

Regular Features



6 meters also deserves a mention as it captured the interest of many EI's which was more evident this year perhaps due to C-19. This is only a short account of my experiences on 6m. Many more stations put a lot of time and energy into the magic band so maybe someone out there could script a few lines for the next Echo Ireland with their expertise and experiences. Early June brought very good mornings on 6m as I decoded BA4UI and JR6. Unfortunately, no joy as I only got a few sporadic decodes. Worked EY8MM for a new one so happy with my lot. The West Coast came hammering in on 6m during the late evening of June 1st, just 1 or 2 decodes and then nothing. I switched to 20m CW and noticed a massive pileup for Hong Kong VR2XN so I gave a few calls and logged.

Late at night I mucked around 20m to work South America which was rocketing in at 599++. No need for power or Steppir so I enjoyed a barefoot opening with the Cobwebb and logged 9Z4FE in Trinidad & Tabasco sauce. At the time of writing, South America was not scarce when the sun goes down in EI. Pick your mode from 15m – 80m and you will bag every part of South America / Caribbean. Remember 10m which has an element of magic to it as well. Don't just spin through the band and assume it's dead. Keep an eye on the beacons. Put out a CQ and you might get a surprise.

With a work trip cancelled June 4th I switched on the radio early and that was my first sight of JA on 6m this year. I worked JH4IFF but opening only lasted approximately 15 minutes from 0854z – 09:04z. The screen lit up wall to wall with JA so headed down to the CW portion with long CQ's but no dice. MD0CCE continued to work JA but could only sit and watch. Declan EI6FR alerted folks of very early morning 6m openings (05:45) to JA/ASIA.

Early morning on **June 6th** the Cobwebb was great to the West Coast USA and Hawaii on both FT8 and CW. I worked Washington State on 20 CW and kept an eye/ear on 6m. Best DX was UN6T in Kazakhstan. DL was knocking the socks off the middle East and OH was pulverizing JA but EI was relatively quiet. Jim E51JD was 59+ in my shack which I haven't heard in a long time. He was giving out long CQ's with plenty of stations going back but he obviously couldn't hear all that many. I gave him the usual quick call and exchanged flowers !!

I was on the lookout for OY (Faroe Islands) on 6m often only receiving a single decode on FT8. Got a heads up from Dec EI6FR of OY presence on 6m so had OY5ET in the log within a few calls. Turned out I worked a scatter of OY's, one after another. I noticed EI got the calling, probably a Facebook alert and hammered away with TF and OY for a good hour. Not worth a sausage for DXCC but I like to work Maritime Mobile (MM) so logged 4S7JL/MM way down deep in the Southern Atlantic. Very strong signals both ways on 20m as he was sitting on a saltwater amplifier !!

Did a tour of the bands and came across AH6V on 18.080 mhz CW. Had a small ragchew with him to blow off the dust from the Key.

Early morning on **June 7th**, around 06:30z brought JA to OZ and DL with nothing in EI but the usual suspects. Poked the nose in on 10m to find it wide open to Asiatic Russia and Western Malaysia. Logged 9M2TO at 06:03z followed by a host of JA's. Tried hard to work VK8NSB and a SQ9 replied over and over again on the VK's QRG so that ended in tears. Tried to complete an exchange with 9M2TDX and it was the same issue. Enough of that so I went back to 6m.

6m was shaping up with small chirps and had all the hallmarks of a JA opening with the MUF to the East of us looking good. The UK had the pleasure of working one JA after another while EI sat looking at an empty screen. Congrats to Declan EI6FR who landed a JA for a new one on 6m with nothing on the Wee County screens. Kept an eye on DXMaps/MUF and sure enough the screen lit up with JA and two HL stations. With JA already confirmed I turned my attention to HL but despite my best efforts I didn't crack open South Korea. I was delighted to see a large amount of EI activity as they worked Asia on 6m. Concentrated

Regular Features

my time on 6m CW and worked a good fist of EU's.

June 7th turned out to be "A night to Remember", the USA/South America came thundering in on 6m FT8 with good strong sometimes + RSSI values. I worked a few West Coast USA stations for the first time. No new DXCC entity for me on 6m FT8 so that was my Q to try the CW portion of the band. I was a wee bit late on the scene as Declan EI6FR was already down there pounding brass over the Atlantic. It was a pleasure to spin the dial in peace to search and pounce on NA. I ended up working a half dozen before shuteye as the opening was still there just around 23:30.

Declan EI6FR, in his quest to become an old SOTA-mountain goat, scaled Djouce mountain in June and had an absolutely cracking signal on 14.063 mhz SOTA. While on my work-break I fired up the KX3 (10 watts) as EI6IL/P. The antenna was a simple homebrew dipole cut in at 14.050 mhz. Fooled the antenna into resonance on 30m and worked EI6FR on 10.114 mhz. SOTA activity is a wonderful aspect to the hobby and fair play to all those hardy souls who climb the peaks in all kinds of weather and conditions.

I tend to forget the low bands over the summer period so I fired up the 80m homebrew vertical when the sun went down. I was pleasantly surprised to be called by a few Indonesian stations after my CQ. Quickly logged YB0COU and YE1NZ on 3.573 mhz FT8 and was then called by PY5EW. The following is a screenshot of where my 80m signal was received at 22:30z. The DL callbook attacked me for my square so I worked a few and got out of Dodge. Just before teardown I got a call from CE7VPQ and was delighted as this was a new DXCC on 80m. I saw VK6HH making a selective CQ SA call so left him alone. He broke his campaign for South America and worked a DL so one call later he was in my log. Took a listen across 80m CW and came across D2EB on his CQ. Couldn't believe my luck when I logged him on the second call for another new DXCC on 80m and particularly on CW. Happy camper and shutdown for the night.

All the action around **mid June** was on 6m with more and more EI's making it onto the scene. Excellent and sometimes prolonged openings were experienced from EI to the Caribbean and most mornings JA made momentary appearances. To my recollection Doug EI2CN worked approx. 20 JA's on 6m in a row on his new 6m Quad antenna.

Unfortunately 6m demands a lot of time sitting in the long grass, reading the signs of propagation but in



my experience is its very hard to predict. Luckily, Padraic EI5IX is a propagation God, very helpful and informative in propagation theory and practice. The MUF data on DX Maps is very helpful and a lot of folks use the KST chat room to keep each other informed of live conditions. I even saw stations giving out their reports on KST – a complete NO NO.

News from around the Globe

T6 – Afghanistan: Noting that Afghanistan stopped issuing YA callsigns just after 9/11 and now only use T6 calls. S53R, Robert, operating as T6AA returned to Afghanistan on June 10th last. His amplifier is sick so he uses 100 watts on the air. Keep an eye and an ear out for Robert as he hits the bands with an impressive signal.

*

The EIDXG Event June 1st-August 30th: EI9FBB, David Deane The goal was to work as many DXCC entities, CQ zones, and members of the EIDXG Irish group, and EI/GI counties as possible. Each of these counts once regardless of band and mode you work them on. Send your log from whatever logging software no later than September 6. There will be plaques for leading scorers and (mysterious) "bonus prizes." Says Dave, "So why not join in the fun and get DXing again?", www.eidxg.com/sc2020.

The Online propagation report on www.space.com was as follows. "The Sun unleashes its biggest flare since 2017. Is Solar Cycle 25 waking up?" One answer to the question is "It is still too soon to tell," but also "the Sun may be coming out of it's slumber at long last." www.space.com/sun-unleashes-biggest-solar-flare-since-2017.html. The flare erupted Saturday, two days ago. It was an M-class, "so it was

Regular Features

no monster.” And “it wasn’t aimed at Earth, so there is no chance of supercharged auroras from a potential associated coronal mass ejection of solar plasma.” Still, it is seen as a sign the Sun may be ramping up to be more active.

W7FN, David Schaller, noted the 6M EU opening, a “historic” one he said, from the Pacific Northwest (of the US) to Europe. It started at about 1430Z on Sunday May 31st and went for two hours. On 50323 he worked 12 countries, N7BT worked 14, N7RO had 10 and N7DED had 12. Dave is in Washington State, grid CN88. On the list of countries coming through were G, HA, CY, S5, I, ON, SV, SV9PA, DL, 4O, 9A, TK, GD, GW, YT and others. He says longtime 6M DXers from his area say they had never experienced a Europe opening like this one.

Russian Research Station “Mirny”: A fire at the Russian research station “Mirny” in the Antarctic blazed through a radio room, but nobody was injured. The fire broke out on June 21st at 13:40GMT. The radio room, a meteo room, a lab and a server room burned down in the fire. Eleven people, who worked at the damaged building, were evacuated and resettled at other premises. A probe into the cause of the fire was launched.

CE9 – Antarctica - KC4USV at the McMurdo Station hamshack has been QRV and counts for IOTA AN-011.

DU – Philippines - M0FGC, Tim, is now permanently in Arayat, about 80 kilometer north of Manila, and QRV as DU3TW.

F – France - F6KMB, the “Jean Bart” club in Dunkirk, had special call sign TM80DYN on the air during June 2020 marking 80 years since Operation Dynamo, when 338,000 soldiers were evacuated from Dunkirk in World War II.

G – England - GB2CDK marked the 150th anniversary of the death of author Charles Dickens on June 9, 1870. They describe Dickens as the greatest novelist of the Victorian era.

VE – Canada - VA2CZ, Pierre, operated with special call XL2Z in the CQ WPX CW Contest.

VE – Canada - The Montreal Formula One Grand Prix was cancelled but VE2SPEED was on the air anyway.

YN – Nicaragua - YN7ZTR is Trevis Rissler, a missionary working in Gaunacastillo for the next two years. His license only allows him to run 50 watts max into an Inverted vee about 23 feet about the ground.

OJ0 – Market Reef - OH3JR, Henri was active from Market Reef. He was QRV as OJ0A during the COVID-19 event in June. He used an assortment of wires as the beam was dismantled to prevent antenna damage over the winter season.

K1JT, Joe Taylor reports that he enjoyed the multi-hop sporadic E and in his own words “an excellent test of the original design goals for FT8, and more recently also FT4.” Over several hours, he worked 76 European stations, 37 with FT8 on 50.313 (mostly) or 50.323. The other 39 were FT4 on 50.318, “in just 44 minutes.” Joe says, “I strongly recommend that for such openings in the future you should try FT4. It’s twice as fast as FT8, with only a 3db penalty on the AWGN channel. The sensitivity penalty is even less on a fading channel.” Joe says it was also an excellent opportunity to use good operating practices. “As recommended, most European stations transmitted in the first/even sequence in both FT4 and FT8. North American stations transmitted in second sequence. This procedure minimizes QRN from strong local stations and helps everyone to work DX.”

DX UP AND COMING

3X – Guinea, F4AJQ, Frank, says the F6KOP team, noting their successful E44CC Palestine operation in February, are now planning another operation, this one for January 2021. Assuming the borders open after COVID-19 and they can travel safely, they plan to be on Guinea’s Kassa Island, IOTA AF-051, QRV on 160-10 “with maybe 60M,” CW, SSB, RTTY and FT8, with five stations on simultaneously. They will have three beams, several verticals and receiving antennas too.

AF-051 – Kassa Island, AF-051, is planned for next January from Guinea on the west Africa coast. F4AJQ, Frank, says the F6KOP team, noting their E44CC Palestine operation in February, are now planning this next operation. Assuming the borders open after COVID-19 and they can travel safely, they plan to be QRV on 160-10 “with maybe 60M,” CW, SSB, RTTY and FT8, with five stations on simultaneously. They will have three beams, several verticals and receiving antennas too.

OA – Peru - OA9DVK, Daniel, is formerly IK2SGL/OA9, located in the Amazonas region of Peru. He believes he is the only active Amateur Radio operator from this isolated area. His station consists of a Yaesu FT891 and Kenwood TS-480SAT. Daniel is using a 43 meter long end fed antenna up 12 meters

Regular Features

and a 2 element vertical Moxon on 20 meters. He can operate on 1.8 through 50 MHz on all modes. DJ and his XYL have been living in Peru since 2015 and are missionaries. They spent three and a half years living in the Ucayali region (OA8) and have recently moved to the Awajun land (OA9).

VK – Australia - ACMA (Australian Communications and Media Authority), who issue licenses in VK, has authorized two new WIA (Wireless Institute Australia) special event calls. First it's VII10WIA in celebration of the 110th anniversary of WIA, the oldest Amateur Radio Society. The license is good from June 1 to December 31, 2020. Next, it is VK20HOME to remind everyone of the Covid-19 restrictions.

V3 – Belize, KA6YPP, Don, is now living in Belize and has been issued the call V31NT. He runs low power, has verticals and dipoles for antennas and has "limited time for DX".

3D2 – Fiji Islands: Starting in September 3D2AG, Antoine, the season begins to work US stations on 160 meters. The best time to work the US East Coast is typically during their sunrise period. When he is QRV he can also be found on the ON4KST Low Band Chat page. W3ICM, Fred, says FK8IK, Mic, who is "in the same area" is frequently QRV on 160 meters "during the winter months". Mic is often QRV on 40 meters and 80 meters.

P4 – Aruba: Members of the Aruba Amateur Radio Club will be operating special event station P42WW to commemorate the end of WWII, 75 years ago. Activity will begin on September 2nd and go through the end of September. The prefix P42 has never been used before. Activity will be on all bands and modes.

9H – Malta: In September DL2AAZ, Reiner will be active from Gozo Island using special call 9H3SAT, issue by Malta Communications Authority. Activity will be on the HF bands, 6 meters and especially on Satellite QO-100. He will only be on SSB and CW from grid locator JM76cb.

5T – Mauritania: Since April 5T5PA (PA5X), Johannes, had been operating remotely. He was in the Netherlands and his equipment in Mauritania. He made it back to his station in Mauritania and QRV since July 27th.

LA7GIA, Ken, who did a six hour operation last year as **JX7GIA** on April 4, 2019 announced a low band trip to Jan Mayen in 2021 with the callsign **JX0X**. Permission has been granted from the Military and the Norwegian authorities for an international team to enter Jan Mayen on a 2 week DXpedition in late September 2021. The JX0X team members are Ken LA7GIA, Mats RM2D, Dima RA9USU and Dominik R4BE.

This is an all band, all mode DXpedition but the team will focus on low bands 160-30 using CW and Digi mode. They have been given the best QTH to work NA and Japan with beach access and proposed antenna farm close to salt water. Low band verticals combined with 1 kW amplifiers and 4 stations up and running shall give the best possibility in many years to work that much needed low band slot. It is 21 years since the last 160m QSO from Jan Mayen.

Some of the DX worked over the Summer from my QTH.

20m	10/12/15m	17m	30m	40m	6m	80m
VR2XAN	9M2TO	ZZ6CRASMO	HB9DGV P	ZW5STAYHOME	UN3GX	HP2DFA
9Z4FE	RU4SO	AH6V	HB9DGV M	OH1STAYHOME	EYSMM	DJAH
KH6U	RW0AR	SP6NW	EI6FR P	OMJR	UN3G	9K2KH
E39TGW	ST5PA	SP1AA	HB9DGV P	OMJR	ELKCC	EA1DSK
KL7SB	EA5BLP	DK7ZT	RA0FF	ZL30	IK2UCK	RLK
4X4FD	DIEB	KL7TC	E7EA	HP2NG	JH4FF	YB0COU
4S7L NM	OK1NGI	YO4RDI	JA0DAJ	HK4SAN	UN6T	YE1NZ
OY9JD	TZ4AM	OY1CT	NE1KK	TF5B	OY5ET	PY5EW
ZW5STAYHOME	5B60AMX	5R8U	F4FLQ	A41CK	LAV7A	RD4D
P12MAN	IW1EDG	5R8U	PY4ZO	GM8OFQ	OY1OF	CE7VPQ
DP0POL NM	5B60AMX	FK8HA	YV1AFL	A71AM	TF1A	VK6HH
PY4BZ	RU4LM	ES2HV	HNDAR	OJ0 OH5BRJ	TF1OL	D2EB
ZL4TT	JS6TWW	HLXCFY	HP2AT	EI6FR P	OY1DZ	R9SR
N6GG	SS1D	OD5PY	HCSVF	E2A	EI6FR	PY5EW
A60ENM3	RAAZ	JA1HKC	SV3AUWA	JJ2JU	OE5FSZ	CP6UA
WP4LU	OZ6GH	R90WDW	PA2RO	JA4FDZ	VY5UA	PUGTA
KH6M	4E1EGH	7K1EQG	EI6FR P	VY4BCD	W1FV	OJ0R
VK3CWB	YD9AGI	JA1LSY	JJ2JU	H38MQ	KC1XX	E1E
ZW5B	HL2ZN	JR1KAG	EI6FR P	UA9LL	K1ZZ	OD6ZZ
OD5VB	SP1BAS	EI6FR P	OZ1RDN	EI6FR P	K1TEO	40SA
4U1A	EA1ANM4	JH8BY	RA0AM		J69DS	RA1LQNM
6K0FS	9Y4DG	7L4VYK	IZ3VYU		BG0BBB	PY2VOX
DIEB	VK7XX	BG0BPZ	ROAZ		UN3J	DL7AOJ
R108WWS	SP6ET	JA7FAS	4U1UN		A65BR	5B60AMX
KH6TU	HL2EZ	7M4HOA	TF3Y P		A65DR	JE0YMM
ES1JD	A61Q	UV7MM	BMDHZ		HV0A	PY2GTA
4S7L NM	SZ4VJ	HL4HPK	HK4FZ		HZ1BW	
PY2CP	HC2AO	4U1UN			VO1HP	
VE9HF	VU1RC	UN6TA			FG8OJ	
TF3IG	TZ4AM	UN3G			J35X	
YV5DRN	HK1X	XQ6CF			8P2K	
KL2D	CE1OEB	9Z4AH			9Z4Y	
HC1HC	SK87LR	CO1LY			WP2B	
V85AHV	NQ1KN	HC1EG			JATSG	
V51P	J6HZ	HP2AT			JASXG	
YV4AW	LU4AT	VV5EVA			ENJA	
HP9SAM	NP4EB	4F3OM			VO1SO	
NGRVI	KP4COD	PT2VHF			ST5PA	
XQ6CF	HXMBG	DO7YB				
VU3NXI	HC6PE	RUL				

Regular Features

DX Calendar

So that's it for another edition of HF/6 happenings. I wish you all well, keep safe, unplug equipment for electrical storms which are becoming a little more frequent in EI.

Make sure to get your antenna farm is Autumn/Winter ready and hopefully enjoy the radio over the coming months. It doesn't really matter what band/mode one uses it's just important if you go to the trouble of sitting an Experimenter Exam that one applies this skill set to the hobby and enjoys the radio. The DX is out there so go get it as it generally doesn't come looking for you !!

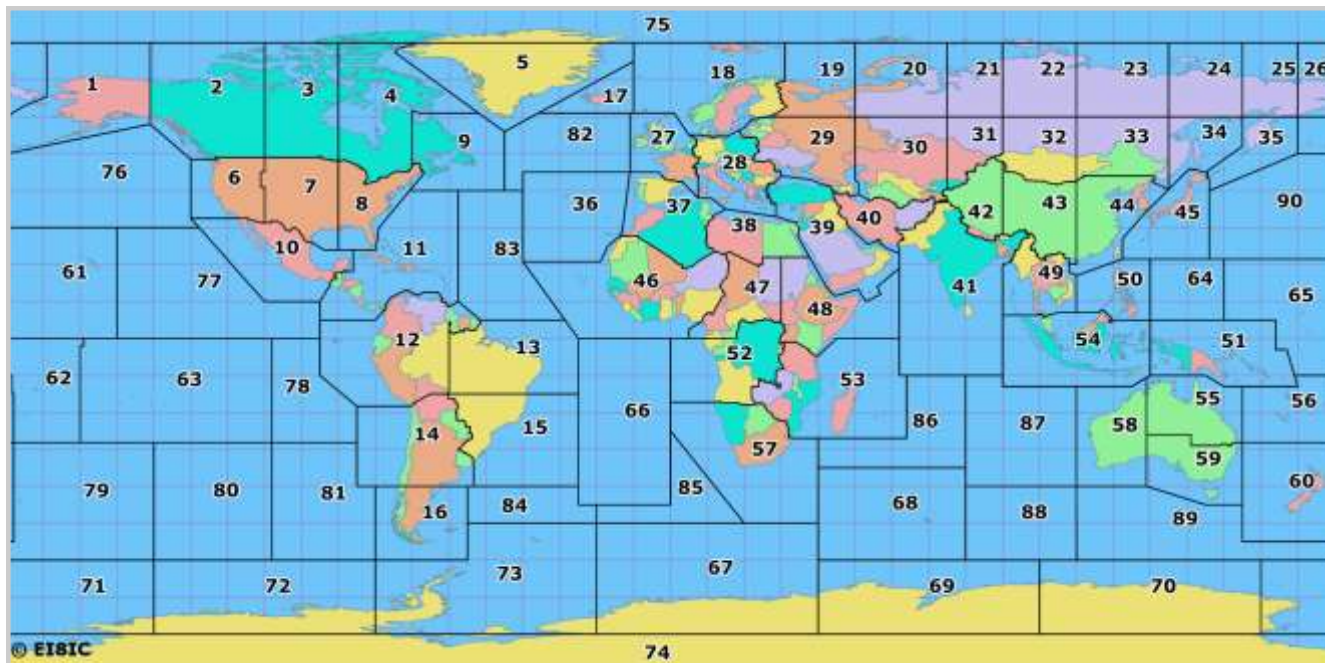
September						
2020 Sep04	2020 Sep18	Malta	9H3TI	DL2AAZ	20200713	By DL2AAZ (JM75cb); 40-6m;
2020 Sep06	2020 Sep17	Albania	ZA	OE6TQG	20200218	By OE6TQG as ZA/OE6TQG
2020 Sep08	2020 Oct02	Liechtenstein	HB0	Home Call	20200713	By DL5YM as HB0/DL5YM, DL5YL
2020 Sep11	2020 Sep13	Monaco	3A	IW1RBI	20200828	By IW1RBI as 3A/IW1RBI
2020 Sep15	2020 Sep23	Faroe Is	OY	LoTW	2019123	OY/DL2AQI OY/DL4APJ
2020 Sep24	2020 Sep27	Svalbard	JW	LoTW	20200710	LB1QI as JW/LB1QI IOTA-EU026;
CQ WW DX Contest, RTTY (Sep 26-27, 2020)						
October						
2020 Oct03	2020 Oct06	Ogasawara	JD1BLY	J15RPT	J15RPT 20200804	J15RPT Chichijima Isl (IOTA AS-031);
2020 Oct07	2020 Oct15	Palau	T88UW	LoTW	20200214	JH7IPR Koror I (IOTA OC-009)
2020 Oct14	2020 Oct27	St Kitts & Nevis	V47JA	LoTW	W5JON 20200527	By W5JON Calypso Bay
2020 Oct19	2020 Oct28	Kosovo	Z66DX	LoTW	DL2AWG 20191213	DM2AUJ DL2AWG
2020 Oct19	2020 Oct28	Sable I	CY0	Club Log OQRS	WA4DAN 20190513	By WA4DAN N2IEN K5DHY K5YY K4UEE WW2DX AA4NC N8AA N2TU
CQ WW DX Contest, SSB (Oct 24-25, 2020)						
November						
2020 Nov11	2020 Nov25	Surinam	PZ5GE	LoTW	20200705	DJ4EL Houttuyn
2020 Nov16	2020 Nov19	Surinam	PZ5W	LoTW	20200705	DJ4EL Papegaaien Isl IOTA SA-092
2020 Nov23	2020 Dec01	St Vincent	J88PI	GW4DVB Direct	20200803	GW4DVB Palm Isl IOTA NA-0025



The IARU World Championships are administered by the ARRL, in Connecticut, USA.

The objective is to support amateur self-training in radio communications including improving amateur operating skills, conducting technical investigations, and intercommunicating with other amateurs around the world, especially IARU member society headquarters stations, using the 160, 80, 40, 20, 15 and 10-meter bands.

This contest is a qualifier for the WRTC (*Olympics of Ham Radio*), held every four years. The next WRTC is in Italy 2022. Bonus points are for each new ITU zone and headquarter station.



In 2020, three stations volunteered to air the Irish Headquarter station EI0HQ.

Thos, EI2JD, and Oleg, EI7KD, operated from Dublin on 40m CW, using an inverted V and GP vertical, plus beverages. Logging was done by TR4W. Oleg was trying out his brand new radio room.



Ralph, EI2KU, operated from near Cappoquin on SSB using an end-fed on 80m. Ralph reports it also performs well on 40m, 20m and 15m. He also used a 20m ¼ wave ground plane, giving an edge for DX. Ralph used SD by EI5DI for logging. His highlight was 5am Sunday morning on 40m, working Brazil, Dominican Republic, the USA and Canada. A big thank you to EI2ILB Tom, for the loan of a transceiver when it looked like Ralphs was going faulty, at the last minute.



Features

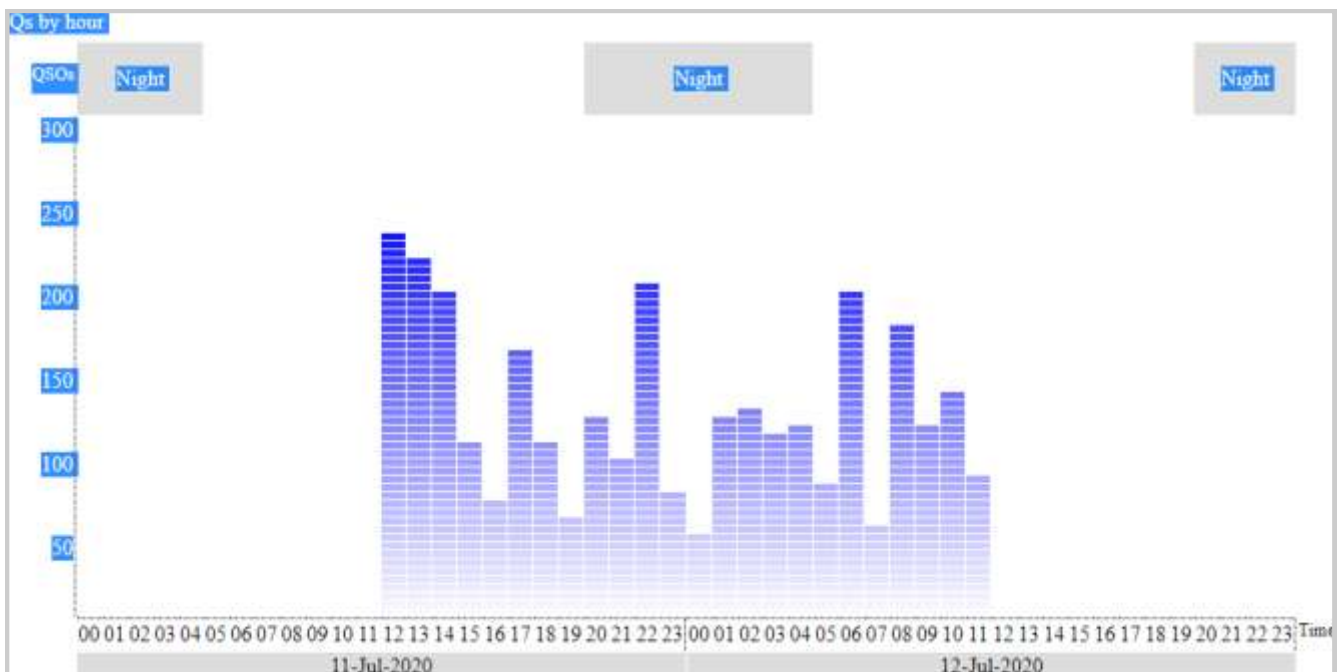
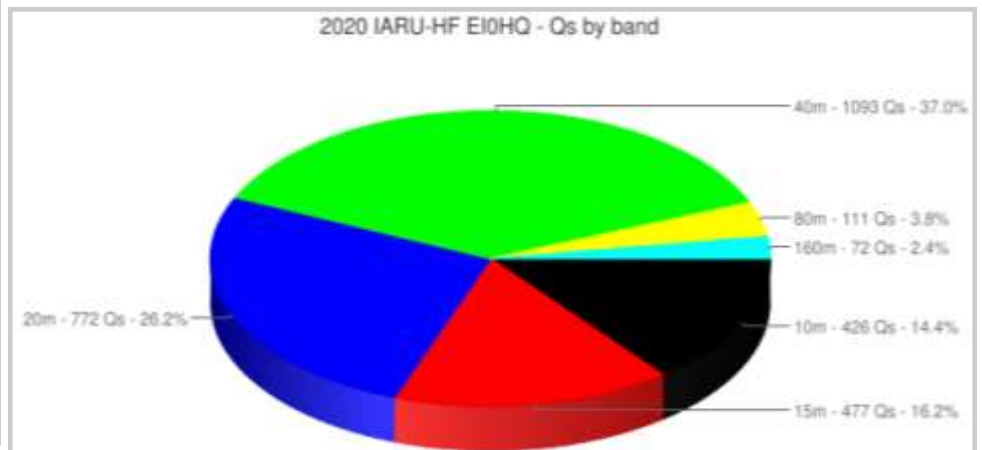
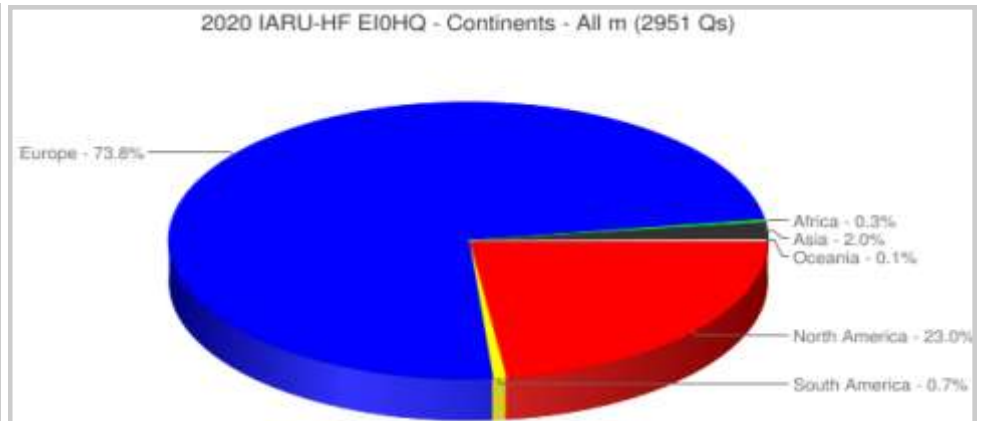
Gerard, EI5KF, operated from Mitchelstown on CW, using an OB15-7 and dipoles. Logging by Wintest. His highlight was ZL, YB and JA on Sunday morning.



There were a total of 2951 QSOs, 38 HQ stations worked consisting of 73 countries, on 6 continents and 34 Zones logged. All bands were in good shape, for a change.

Top 10 Countries Logged

Country	%
USA	20.7
Germany	17.1
Russia	6.9
Czech Republic	4.8
Poland	4.5
Italy	4.0
Ukraine	3.5
Hungary	2.8
Netherlands	2.7
England	2.3
Others	30.7



Features



Countries by time

Legend (QSOs per each 15 min. period) : 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 and more

North America			All m Qs	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
1	CM	Cuba	1																								
2	FM	Martinique	1																								
3	HI	Dominican Republic	1																								
4	J6	St. Lucia	1																								
5	K	United States	610																								
6	KL	Alaska	2																								
7	KP2	US Virgin Islands	2																								
8	KP4	Puerto Rico	5																								
9	VE	Canada	55																								
South America			All m Qs	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
1	CE	Chile	2																								
2	CX	Uruguay	4																								
3	FY	French Guiana	2																								
4	LU	Argentina	3																								
5	PJ4	Bonaire	1																								
6	PY	Brazil	10																								
7	EA	Spain	47																								
8	EI	Ireland	12																								
9	ER	Moldova	3																								
10	ES	Estonia	12																								
11	EU	Belarus	44																								
12	F	France	58																								
13	G	England	69																								
14	GD	Isle of Man	2																								
15	GM	Scotland	7																								
16	GW	Wales	2																								
17	HA	Hungary	82																								
18	HB	Switzerland	29																								
19	I	Italy	118																								
20	*IT9	Sicily	7																								
21	LA	Norway	19																								
22	LX	Luxembourg	4																								
23	LY	Lithuania	62																								
24	LZ	Bulgaria	35																								
25	OE	Austria	15																								
26	OH	Finland	36																								
27	OH0	Aland Islands	4																								
28	OK	Czech Republic	142																								
29	OM	Slovak Republic	37																								
30	ON	Belgium	33																								
31	OY	Faroe Islands	1																								
32	OZ	Denmark	23																								
33	PA	Netherlands	80																								
34	S5	Slovenia	48																								
35	SM	Sweden	45																								
36	SP	Poland	133																								
37	SV	Greece	3																								
38	UA	European Russia	204																								
39	UA2	Kaliningrad	5																								
40	UR	Ukraine	104																								
41	YL	Latvia	19																								
42	YO	Romania	29																								
43	YU	Serbia	27																								
44	Z3	North Macedonia	4																								
Africa			All m Qs	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
1	EA8	Canary Islands	6																								
2	FR	Reunion Island	1																								
3	ZS	South Africa	1																								
Asia			All m Qs	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
1	4L	Georgia	2																								
2	4X	Israel	4																								
3	5B	Cyprus	4																								
4	HS	Thailand	2																								
5	HZ	Saudi Arabia	2																								
6	JA	Japan	5																								
7	TA	Asiatic Turkey	1																								
8	UA9	Asiatic Russia	33																								
9	UN	Kazakhstan	6																								
Oceania			All m Qs	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
1	YB	Indonesia	2																								
2	ZL	New Zealand	2																								



Amateur radio is a hobby that encompasses many things. Primarily, it involved listening – utilizing the human sense of hearing. When the wireless came into people's homes in the 1930's, families were glued to the speaker from which whole new worlds of information and imagination emanated. It is well accepted that after the act of reading, listening to a story exercises the imagination better than anything. The same fascination that the wireless brought to countless families is reflected in the world of amateur radio.

As humans, when we communicate, we generally use all of the senses. The experts tell us that 70% of communication is non-verbal and happens through body language and nuance. Television and video engage us for just this reason. Almost five billion videos are watched on YouTube every single day with 300 hours of video being uploaded to YouTube every minute! Smartphone users currently spend some 3 hours and 15 minutes per day using their devices. We are well and truly hooked on visual entertainment. It demands little of us and it is irresistible.

Where does all this leave the amateur radio operator? Is listening to dots and dashes enough in this age of multisensory experience? Wireless communication has lost much of its glamour with the arrival of mobile phone technology. The magic of cell-phone technology – the miracle of being able to contact virtually any on the planet instantly has lost its magic to the multimedia sharing of tiktok and Instagram. Without any of us really being aware of it, amateur radio has jumped into this arena. Where CW and SSB are entirely auditory modes, digital modes, RTTY and PSK are exclusively visual though quite unexciting, where the operator watches vertical signal trails on the screen and intervenes with a few mouse clicks or keyboard moves.

Along comes FT8. This digital mode arrived at a time of all time low propagation, being a weak signal mode it is capable of propagating through noise unlike any other previous digital mode. It was devised by Nobel Prize winner Joe Taylor, K1JT. The real genius of this mode is in the Technicolor computer display of green, pink and red representing what is being heard and exchanged. Where the display of PSK was unremarkable, FT8 is real eye candy. It is visually entertaining and has many of the attributes of a video game. Personally, I find it quite addictive and wasn't surprised to find many dyed in the wool conservative CW operators rallying into FT8. There are between 5000 and 10,000 hams transmitting on FT8 in any given hour, according to the online site PSK reporter. The attraction is a combination of the involvement in making lots of Qso's and DX and the crack-cocaine of flashing colours and waterfalls.

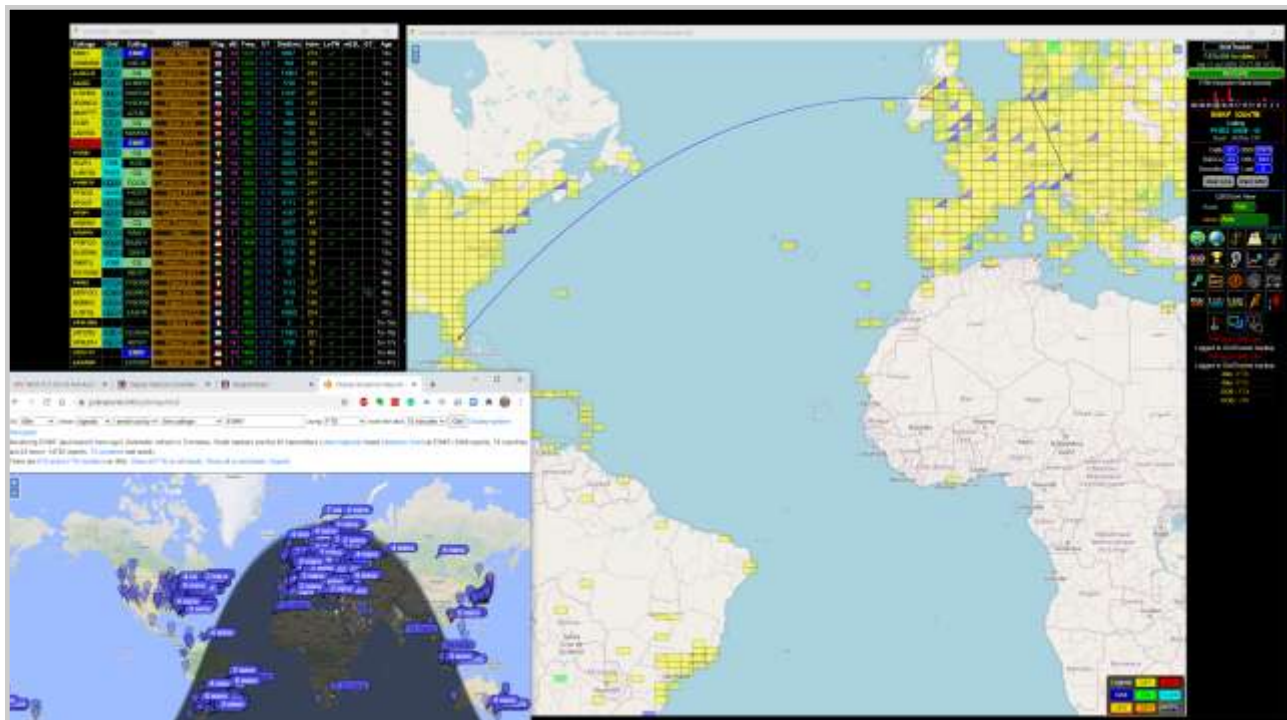
The arrival of a new program developed by N0TTL called GridTracker has taken the entertainment value of FT8 to

whole new level. This free program mandates that you have some serious screen real estate in your shack. You will need space to display all of the goodies on offer. It provides a map of the world which shows graphically the activity of your band. Grids worked and those active can be shown. It reads your log and shows the grids you've worked and those you haven't. Hover the mouse over a grid and it will show who you've worked in that grid. It gives additional and visual alerts on call-sign DXCC and more. Furthermore, it displays a call sign roster of all signals being received on the band in fabulous colours and this becomes the medium through which you initiate QSO's. Operating the radio has come alive. We can now see, in real time, where our signal is being heard, and from where our contact is coming. QSL details of the contact are automatically displayed and the FT8 exchanges



Features

As discussed the GridTracker Display illustrated below offers many features to enhance the FT experience.



become personal. I love it! GridTracker takes up where DX-Atlas (Afreed) started and adds steroids integrating everything we can display about a QSO along with your own log history, countries worked, awards etc.

In her deeply disturbing book, *“Addiction by Design – Machine Gambling in Las Vegas”*, Natasha Schull describes the ‘crack cocaine’ effect of electronic screens on our brains. The goal for compulsive gamblers is not to win money, as one might suppose, but the goal is to get into the ‘Zone’, the place where one’s own actions become indistinguishable from the functioning of the machine. The appeal of the games, akin to the screens of FT8, is that they give the operator a sense of control and one can lose oneself in a state of absorbed automaticity! I’ve been there!

Amateur radio has moved into the entertainment business. Every new transceiver comes complete with Waterfall signal displays. The new Yaesu FT101 takes its front panel waterfall a step further into glorious 3D with amazing graphics. Even the hand-helds are now all singing and dancing in colour!



Throw away your headphones and put on your glasses – it’s all looking good from here!

Hugh Bradley EI9KF



With LOTW, Eqsl and the many other electronic routes to confirmation of a QSO, you would expect the days of exchanging physical qsl cards to be a thing of the past. Far from it. Maybe its nostalgia, maybe many amateurs perceive a real card as the final courtesy of a QSO – whatever the reason the number of cards being processed by the bureau remain significant. Tony Baldwin EI8JK took over the outgoing qsl bureau in 2004, almost seventeen years ago. His records show 43,000 cards processed in his first full year, reducing to 24,000 in 2016. In 2017 the WAW calls were on air resulting in a spike to 30,000 cards in that year. Tony made the decision to retire in 2018 and I took over the outgoing bureau - in that year a further 29,000 cards were shipped to foreign bureau, reducing to 23,000 in 2019. Despite the pandemic we had already shipped over 14,000 cards to foreign bureau by June this year so look set to exceed last years figure.

So how does the Bureau operate? The IARU have an authorised bureau in almost every country in the world where there is amateur activity. They are normally operated by the society representing the IARU in each of those countries. As a result the transfer of cards between bureaus is well organised, each bureau operating under the same guidelines and with regular updates from the IARU on any address or contact change for each country. In Ireland, the IRTS are the official representatives of the IARU and are listed as their QSL Bureau, with a PO Box address for incoming cards. PO Boxes are widely used by National Bureau as it permits continuity of address even as personnel responsible for the bureau might change. Being the approved Bureau for the IARU is a major advantage as it means whatever country you contact there will be an official IARU bureau listed for your card.

Packages arriving at the PO Box are regularly collected by Pat EI2HX, who is responsible for incoming cards, and myself. We take it in turns as Pat lives in Dundalk and I live in South Dublin, with the PO Box located in North Dublin. Once collected Pat takes responsibility for sorting all the incoming cards by the number in the callsign, these smaller packages are then sent to the sub managers who further sort and distribute the cards to the individual members. Incoming cards for non members of the IRTS are also processed but are held by Pat for at least one year. The recipient will be contacted and advised that if they send a stamped addressed envelope to Pat he will forward on their cards. Members of the IRTS



get the incoming and outgoing QSL service at no cost as part of their membership.

Outgoing cards from members are sent to myself as outgoing manager. They can also be given to anyone attending a committee meeting (usually a committee member or club representative), or left with Pat EI2HX at any of the major rallies. Once received they are sorted by country and are placed into one of many boxes running on shelves in my garage – a bit like a postal sorting office. One box for each country and one for random unusual prefix. Some boxes fill rapidly, some might only see a couple of cards in a month. The decision on when to package and post is taken on a balance of weight and time. Some countries, Germany for instance, could produce 2 Kilo or more cards a month to be packaged. Others might reach up to 500g in a month, others might only be a few cards. As each box is emptied for posting it gets date stamped with the date, so I am always aware of how long cards have been waiting. No cards are held for longer than 16 weeks, even if there is only one to be posted. The average package for posting would be 500g to 1 Kilo and would have been accumulated over a period of up to six weeks. It is all a balance of time held and cost to ship, trying to get the maximum value in the minimum time. Postal costs are increasing on a regular basis and they are based on package weight, increasing in increments of 500g up to 2 Kilo.

Features

All outgoing packages have computer printed labels for the respective bureau and have to carry the appropriate customs declaration and airline contents notification for each country along with a printed return address. My local post office is well aware that the queue is going to grow as they weigh and stamp every package individually. Every package carries the contents listing "Ham Radio QSL Cards" - they have never asked what it means!

Observations I have made on QSL cards, in general, are as follows. Sorting thousands of incoming and outgoing cards can be interesting, it can also be very frustrating. Non standard sizes cause problems as they do not fit the sorting boxes. I recently received a card the size of a business card – that fitted no problem but, I will guarantee it will be lost somewhere in transit abroad. Many cards have computer generated labels, sometimes with the destination call so small it is virtually unreadable. Others will use a combination of colours that make it difficult to read, for instance yellow on orange. Some use a card quality that is so rough the cards become difficult to separate – imagine shuffling a pack of cards made of sandpaper. Others are so badly handwritten the destination call is impossible to decipher. All are processed eventually. The ideal card is standard size with the station call easily read on the front and (most important) also on the back. All should have the destination call sign clearly written or printed in a large font. They should preferably be on gloss or semi gloss card which slides easily and makes sorting a pleasure.



When I took on the operation of the outgoing bureau it was just after the WAW calls went on air. I had already been processing large volumes of cards as QSL manager for calls like EI13CLAN, EI90IARU and EI150ITU, these then had to be boxed and shipped off to Tony EI8JK in West Cork. It seemed to make sense to do it all in-house, receive the requests either by card or via Clublog by email, print the labels, sort the cards and ship them out to the foreign bureau from here in one operation. It has again proved a time and cost saver with the EI100MCV call. I would be happy to offer the same service to any member of the IRTS who may in the future operate a special call. If they wish I can look after their QSL requests, all I need is a copy of the log and a supply of cards. As the outgoing bureau is in-house, I do not have far to go to get their cards on the way and it could save them significant postage costs.

If any member has any queries, complaints or general comments on the operation of the Bureau give myself or Pat EI2HX a call. We are here to offer the best service we can – if there is anything we can do to improve the service please let us know.

Dave EI6AL dave.ei6al@gmail.com

ROAR !

Greetings EI Hams who are members of Rotary Clubs

You may be aware of the International Fellowship of Rotarians of Amateur Radio (ifroar.org) and I thought I would let you know about the RGBI group which operates as an arm of IFROAR with its own Chairman and committee. We run a weekly Sunday morning net on 80m, hold an AGM weekend at different locations and collect subscriptions on behalf of the parent Fellowship. Membership is about 20, which includes a few GI members but as yet none from EI land and it would certainly be good to have some! There is much more information about IFROAR activities on the website ifroar.org.

If this is of interest please contact me by email, below.

73s and keep safe

Robert Frost
(Bob)
G3SZF
Secretary of
ROAR in RGBI
Rotary Club of
Hertford Shires
rrcfrost@hotmail.com



How to Pass Your Morse Test Age 11 or At Any Age



Features

Ryan Morrison EI8KW

My name is Ryan Morrison I live in Stillorgan Co. Dublin and I just passed my morse test a few days ago on 24th June 2020. Perhaps you are thinking of learning morse but have been putting it off please read on.

I didn't know anything about amateur radio until a few months ago. I play tournament chess which is extremely demanding but, with the Covid 19 lockdown I wanted to try something new. I heard my Dad mention a few times that he knew morse code and I thought it would be fun to learn morse too. I also like the history of morse with the SOS Titanic story which I learned about when I visited the Titanic museum in Belfast. I asked my Dad if he thought it would be a good idea for me to learn morse and he said "Sure". He also asked me if I had ever heard of Amateur radio which I hadn't, and he told me he was an amateur radio operator callsign EI9ES but he hadn't been operating for a number of years as his radio developed a fault. He said. "Why not learn morse and the theory and then do the exams?". I thought this was a great idea, which brings me to my first tip.

Tip 1. Start right away

I downloaded a morse code app to my phone and learned the morse for letters A and B within five minutes. If you wait the phone will ring or you will need to walk the dog and it's all over. Morse will always be something you have been meaning to do. The right time to start is today. If you start right away you have already done the hardest part.

Tip 2. Get the app.

There are many good morse code apps but if you spend your time trying to evaluate them all it will prevent you from following Tip 1. I used three morse code apps which were "Morse Code Learn and Play" by Limes Development; also "Koch Morse Trainer" by Bit Ninja and "CW Trainer" by Wolphi LLC but, you really only need one. To save you time I would use CW Trainer by Wolphi LLC if I had to choose only one. I used my pocket money and paid about €3.40 for CW Trainer which is very reasonable and once you have it on your phone you can practice any time. You can also learn morse code for free on the internet. However, you will need an internet connection and it will be a hassle as many of the sites I visited were clunky and "Guess what?" If it is hard you are probably not going to do it for long.



Tip 3. Practice every day (Or nearly every day)

I would recommend fifteen or twenty minutes morse practice per day adding new letters or numbers when you are ready. If that is too long then do ten minutes; if that is still too long do five minutes. Even one minute is better than no minutes because the minutes add up eventually becoming hours. There will be days when you feel you are going backwards but the main thing is to just keep going. The Americans have a saying "A little bit of something is better than a whole lot of nothing". It will take longer to learn morse at one minute per day but you will get there in the end. It is the difference between going to bed at 10pm or 10.01pm. It's the hare and the tortoise scenario. In the story the tortoise wins but, it is better to be the hare, just a smarter hare than the one in the story.

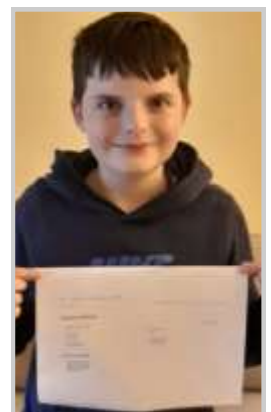
Tip 4. Join the Irish Amateur Radio Examination Resource Pages & Facebook Blog

This was set up by Tony EI5EM. This is a great resource for anyone studying radio theory or morse code. There are morse lessons and lots of people will answer your questions if you are studying for the radio theory test.

In all honesty it is a little presumptuous of me to be offering advice on any aspect of amateur radio when I know everyone reading this has way more experience in amateur radio than I have. I have just turned 11 and up until a few months ago I didn't know anything about amateur radio at all. The main

purpose of this article is to provide motivation for anyone thinking of learning morse. It is just the way I did it. There are many other ways. I took the Dublin test but was just under the pass mark. I still felt I could do it as I was close to the pass mark in the Dublin test so, I applied for the Galway test which was on

the 15th August. There were no places left but due to a last minute cancellation I got a spot. I passed the Galway test. My callsign is EI8KW. I hope you have enjoyed the article and maybe you have advice for me. I am too young to have my own email but you can contact me through Jim Holohan EI4HH email holohaj2@hotmail.com who kindly asked me to write this article.



Ham Radio Lockdown Project - 6 Band Hexbeam

Features

Michael Martin EI4CKB



The lockdown, resulting from Covid-19 gave me an opportunity to take on a project to make a 6 Band Hexbeam. In this article I will

go through the various components and their sources.

Spreaders used are 6m fishing poles purchased from Austria online. Both ends of the spreaders are strengthened, the outside tip with a brass qualpex insert and the end at the centre post with a copper tube. The joints of the pole are glued and strengthened with double cable ties to help prevent splitting.



Reinforced spreaders using brass qualpex insert

Joints glued & strengthened with double cable ties

A 6mm aluminium alloy base-plate was purchased online from Germany and then cut to size and drilled in my workshop.



6mm aluminium alloy base-plate

Insulated 16AWG copper wire and connectors were purchased online from the UK, cut to length and soldered in my workshop. Dyneema rope, nuts, bolts, u-bolts, s-hooks and other bits and pieces of hardware were purchased online in Ireland.

Locally purchased, the center post is a 40mm PVC waste pipe with a stop end up on top to hold the anchor bolt for the tensioning ropes, although there is no real pressure on the center post as the ropes are equally tensioned at that point. The common feed line on the centre post is RG213 MIL grade coax. All joints are sealed with self amalgamating tape and Q30 compound.



I manufactured the mounting stub for the center post from some old piping I had here already and reinforced the outer circumference of it and the center post with a homemade 6mm thick aluminium washer.



Antenna is erected about 27ft above ground and SWR is 1:1 on all 6 bands.

So far so good on the QSO front and fingers crossed it will weather the winds when they come.



73's Michael Martin EI4CKB

Rosslare Wireless Station 1901 - 1913

Features

Michael Kirwan EI3KO



The first British merchant vessel to be fitted with Marconi wireless equipment was the steamer **S.S. Lake Champlain** of the Beaver Line in 1901.

In association with the trial, wireless stations were erected along the route the ship would take leaving Liverpool.

The Southern Star newspaper of 2nd March 1901 reported, "A scheme has been completed under which stations for wireless telegraphy will be erected all along the southern coast of Ireland from Rosslare to Baltimore, in the County of Cork. The system of communication will be the Marconi system, and this coast-line of stations is intended to enable communications to be made if necessary, with the passing Atlantic liners at any time. Some land has been taken for the purpose at Rosslare, where a large pole is to be erected."

The site chosen was on Strand Road just outside the village of Rosslare, County Wexford. In May 1901, a 180 feet pole was erected in three sections, supported by eight stays, to support the aerial. From a distance it looked like the top mast of a ship.



The two-storey house had the wireless room downstairs along with the living room, kitchen and dining area. Upstairs there was accommodation for the wireless operators.

The station was connected to Rosslare post office by landline which was situated nearby and connected into the landline system for communication world-wide.

The S.S. Lake Champlain was fitted out with the wireless equipment in Alexander dock, Liverpool. F.S. Stacey, one of the Marconi engineers acted as a wireless operator on board as there was no such position at the time.

F.S. Stacey described the equipment on board the ship: "The equipment consisted of a ten-inch induction coil working off current supplied by two six-volt accumulators. Four six-volt accumulators were supplied, two being worked whilst the other two were on charge.

At that time there was no switchboard for charging, and the mains was connected to the accumulators through a bank of six carbon filament lamps which provided the necessary resistance. There were no tuning circuits, transmitter jiggers or aerial tuning inductances, the aerial being simply connected to one side of the spark gap and the "earth" to the other. A three centimeter spark was used between balls of 1 ½ centimeters diameter.

The receiving apparatus consisted of two coherer receivers with a Morse inker, the signal being received on tape. The transmitting key consisted of a switch and key combined. The equipment itself was mounted on a table covered with green baize, the accumulators being placed on the floor and the lamp resistance for charging the cells screwed to the bulkhead."

The same equipment was used in Rosslare.

The S.S. Champlain sailed on 21st May 1901 from Liverpool to Halifax, Nova Scotia with about 1,200 people on board. When 13 miles from Holyhead, on the north coast of Wales, the vessel established wireless telegraphy communication with Holyhead Wireless Station. Numerous telegrams were forwarded by passengers to friends in all parts of the United Kingdom and the continent. Communications continued for another hour after passing Holyhead. Next, communication was established with Rosslare Wireless Station and a fresh batch of telegrams was sent. The owners of the ship Beaver Line were advised that the ship had passed Tuskar Rock. Communication continued until the vessel was 30 miles passed Rosslare. The S.S. Lake Champlain subsequently entered Cork harbour to embark the remainder of her passengers.



S.S. Lake Champlain

Features

The new wireless installation aroused tremendous interest among the passengers and crew who visited the cabin during the voyage. When the ship arrived in Halifax it was invaded by an army of reporters who were quick to realise the possibilities of the new form of communication.

There was no wireless station yet in the continent of America to communicate with. On the return voyage the Lake Champlain made contact with Crookhaven Wireless Station which had not been erected at the time of the outward journey. Telegrams were sent to the owners, Beaver Line, and to Queenstown (Cobh) and received some hours before they would have been if the old method of signaling by means of flags had been used. Crookhaven advised that a temporary wireless installation had been erected on board HMS Conway on the River Mersey and to establish communication with them after Holyhead.

After leaving Queenstown the wireless operator communicated with Rosslare when 41 miles distant. For over 5 hours a continuous stream of messages flowed. Upwards of 50 messages being dispatched from the ship advising the owners and friends on shore of the time of arrival, etc.

After ceasing communications with Rosslare contact was made with Holyhead when 33 miles distant. Again, greetings were exchanged. HMS Conway next made contact and instructions were given on arrangements on arrival at Liverpool.

The trial was a huge success and Rosslare and Crookhaven Wireless Stations were open for business.

In August 1901 the Cunard liner S.S. Lucania was fitted with wireless telegraphy and she sailed from New York. By this time Marconi had set up a temporary wireless station on the Nantucket Lightship and Sankety Head lighthouse near New York. The ship left Liverpool on 10th August and communicated with Holyhead, Rosslare and Crookhaven. When 287 miles from Sandy Hook she sent the following message to Nantucket lightship.

"All well on board. We are 287 miles from Sandy hook, with clear weather, and expect to reach New York on Saturday. Please inform Cunard agents."

By September Marconi had a commercial venture where he was charging 6 ½ pence / word on telegrams.

Marconi was determined to send a wireless message across the Atlantic Ocean and he achieved this on 12th December 1901 from a station in Poldhu, Cornwall to a temporary receiving station in Newfoundland. This proved that wireless signals could be received beyond the horizon which had been doubted before. Marconi was now only 27 years old.

By the end of the following year wireless stations were established in Babylon and Sagaponack in New York State. Also, Belle Isle and Chateau Bay on the St Lawrence Seaway.

In Rosslare six wireless operators were employed with an officer in charge working three shifts. The day was divided into three watches, viz., midnight to 8 a.m., 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and 4 p.m. to midnight, two operators being required on each watch. When the station opened first the operators were working only one ship at a time but a few years later it got busier and busier as more ships were equipped with wireless.

The 'Sunny South East' was a good posting as there was a ferry service between Rosslare and Fishguard and a rail service to Dublin. Also, it was only 10 miles to Wexford town.



As the years passed the station got busier and busier. However, the station had a very limited range – 30 or 40 miles. Eventually a more powerful station was built in Fishguard and it was decided to shut Rosslare down. The new station in Fishguard was erected on the top of the cliffs near the Harbour Village. The new equipment had a range of 500 miles.



At midnight on Monday 8th September 1913 the station at Rosslare was closed and the staff transferred to Fishguard and the Rosslare call sign, namely, "GRL", was used for the new station.

The people of Rosslare hoped that the Marconi Company would retain

Features

the station, even if only for sentimental reasons, as it was situated in the county of Wexford of which Guglielmo Marconi's mother was a native, the lady being one of the Jameson family who resided in Enniscorthy.



Today Marconi House in Rosslare is in magnificent condition with a plaque on the wall commemorating Marconi's present there over 100 years ago.

A new era of Morse code communications was beginning in the merchant shipping industry which was to last until 31st December 1988 when Malin Head and Valentia Radio ceased operations on 500kHz. In the United Kingdom on 31st December 1997 the last farewell messages were tapped out in dots and dashes from Lands' End, Portpatrick, Cullercoats and Wick stations as British Telecom ceased its Morse code watchkeeping on the emergency frequency of 500kHz.

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Southern Star. 2nd March 1901.

Irish Independent 20th June 1906.

Dundee Evening Post. 17th august 1901.

Michael Kirwan EI3KO

The Joys of Fault Finding

Jim Holohan EI4HH



If, like me, you have spent many hours repairing your own or someone else's equipment you will always be on the look-out for test and measurement gear that will make the job easier and quicker to solve. For any repair job the go-to tools are the multimeter and the oscilloscope and maybe a LCR meter. Surely, the "Holy Grail" of test gear is the "in-circuit component tester". How many times have you checked out components in situ with your multimeter and just to be doubly sure you desolder it only to find that it is in fact okay? This type of tool is by no means new and numerous variations are available from companies such as Peak Electronic Design Ltd. to name just one. However, unless you run a professional repair service the investment costs in high-end test equipment may well be prohibitive, especially when you only use it occasionally.

A couple of years ago I did actually place an order with Peak Electronics for such a tester but it was out of stock and the waiting time to restock was quite long. I cancelled the order and took to eBay to further research what was available. I didn't have much faith in cheap Chinese copies at that time! However, I was surprised (and sceptical) at the range and the number of functions these units purported to offer. For under €15 how could I go wrong.

I eventually settled on an "ESR meter Transistor Tester LCR Diode Frequency PWM Signal Generator DIY KIT" for the princely sum of €8.69. A companion plastic case was also available at very low cost. The kit was extremely easy to build as the PCB silk-screen and instructions were very clear.

I have been using it regularly over the past few years and other than the odd desoldering job (to be sure, to be sure) I have found it to be a great addition to my toolbox.

While I still use this tester, as you can imagine, there are some more sophisticated ones available nowadays from similar sources at very reasonable cost.



Portishead Radio - A Friendly Voice on Many a Dark Night

Features

A review by Michael Kirwan EI3KO

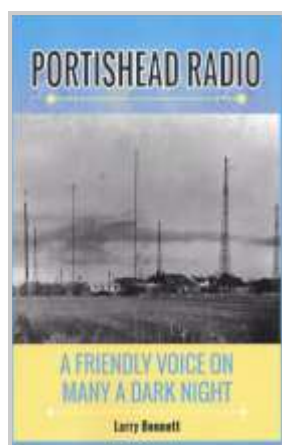


This is a superb book, just published, on the most well-known coast radio station in the world, Portishead Radio. The author is Larry Bennett and the book was published by New Generation Publishing this year, 2020. It is now available directly from the author via the Portishead Radio website or from the following sites:

www.abebooks.co.uk

www.amazon.co.uk,

www.thebookdepository.co.uk



The service of Portishead Radio has its origins going back to 1920 when a site at Devizes, Wiltshire was utilised, using the call Devizes Radio/GKU. As more ships were fitted with wireless telegraphy a new transmitting site at Portishead Down, in Avon became operational with the associated receiving site approximately 20 miles away

at Highbridge, near Burnham-on-Sea, Somerset. Highbridge was where all the staff were located and where the action took place. At the start of the 70s 143 Radio Officers were at Highbridge and 14 Transmitter Engineers at Portishead.

In the early 1930s Highbridge (Portishead) was kept busy working ships all over the world. As well as that, 'flying boats' with their on-board Radio Officers sent wireless telegraphy traffic from South Africa and the Indian sub-Continent.

During WW2 the station was taken over by the Admiralty. Commercial traffic ceased and ships could not transmit in case a direction-finding bearing was taken on them. Activity at Portishead was confined to Admiralty traffic and the handling of distress messages and intercepting enemy traffic. On page 62 there is an interesting list of 24 inland wireless telegraph stations introduced across the U.K. in the event of a complete disruption of the inland service.

After the War the receiving station expanded with additional wings from the control room. The antenna

farm at Highbridge consisted of directional Rhombic aerials spaced every 15 degrees apart. From this antenna arrangement there was an interesting find in 1969. Donald Crowhurst, a British businessman and amateur sailor died while competing in the Sunday Times Golden Globe Race – a single-handed, round the world yacht race. Soon after departing, his yacht began taking on water and he thought it would sink in heavy seas later on in the race. He secretly abandoned the race and began reporting false positions in an attempt to appear to complete the circumnavigation without actually doing so. Suspicions were raised when the positions given by Crowhurst put him in the Indian Ocean, even though his signals were being received on aerials directed to the south and southwest. Crowhurst sadly took his own life when he realised he would eventually be found out.

The area scheme ended in 1972 and with it ended the Royal Navy presence at the station. At this stage, at sea we all hoped to be equipped with more powerful transmitters. We all loved to hear 'de GKB QRY 3' but our heart sank when QRY 2 was the Canberra or Ark Royal.

The ageing transmitters at Portishead stopped transmitting in 1979 and were replaced by sites at Rugby, Leafield, Ongar and Dorchester. The Portishead site eventually became the location for the Avon & Somerset Police Headquarters.

In 1983 a new purpose-built station was opened beside the old one in Highbridge. The introduction of the satellite-based GMDSS (Global Maritime Distress and Safety System) in 1999 was the final 'nail in the coffin' for terrestrial radio services worldwide. Staff who retired were not replaced and surplus staff were redeployed.

The final chapter - Life at Portishead - is a very funny read with stories about the characters that worked in the station. The book has about 150 black and white photographs. It even has one of the station cat 'Sparks.' There is an excellent set of annexes with details on the associated radio stations. Leafield, Ongar, Dorchester, Criggion, Baldock, Bearley, Somerton and Brent.

On 30th April 2000, Portishead Radio broadcast the final message and the famous station was no more. The iconic building at Highbridge was demolished to make way for a housing estate. Sadly, nothing remains of Portishead Radio today.

Features

The author, Larry Bennett has been involved in radio communications all his life. He obtained his MRGC certificate in 1979 and worked in Portishead Radio for 20 years. He then went on to work as a Radio Signals Editor for the Admiralty List of Radio Signals Section of the UK Hydrographic Office in Taunton, Somerset. I thoroughly enjoyed reading the book and I highly recommend it.

Have a look at <https://portisheadradio.co.uk> and go to audio files to listen to a traffic list and weather forecast.

Michael Kirwan EI3KO

Hurdy Gurdy Museum of Vintage Radio

The new contact number for the Hurdy Gurdy Museum is:

Simon Herbert

Mobile: 0863818865

Email: hgmovr@gmail.com

<https://sites.google.com/site/hurdygurdymuseum/home>

The museum is closed for now due to Covid-19, but will re-open as soon as it is safe to do so.



WHY?

Jim Holohan EI4HH



I would never consider myself a “Collector”, though I do tend to hoard loads of old PCB’s from a variety of old stripped-down radios, televisions, transceivers etc, etc. However, a few years ago I did make one exception.

It began as a casual conversation in the South Dublin Radio Club with Dave Hooper EI2HR (SK). Dave had a long time love affair with the Thermionic Valve and was always ready to enthuse about the projects he had built around valve technology. In the course of the conversation he mentioned his particular love for a WWII Lancaster Bomber receiver R1155B which he had carefully refurbished. Being somewhat familiar with valve technology myself and having an interest in vintage radio I quizzed him further on the history of R1155 receiver. He told me the B model was distinguishable from the original production model by the fact that the tuning dial was off-set from the centre so that the radio operator could see the dial clearly while wearing his heavy gloves!

A few years later I was again having a chat with Dave and the subject of the R1155B came up. At this stage he was downsizing and becoming less active. He asked me if I would be interested in buying the receiver as he wished to get rid of it but wanted it to go to a good home. I jumped at the opportunity and met Dave in his home where I was treated to a tour of his shack which had a complete valve camera control unit built by him. Having struck a deal I headed home to find a prominent spot in my shack to display this beautiful, historic and perfectly working receiver.

WHY? What Have You? A term more commonly used in buying and selling or swapping rigs etc. In this instance, however, Echo Ireland is looking for you to submit your stories and photographs of whatever Boat Anchors you may have lying around your shack or attic. I’m sure there are some gems out there. So **WHY?**



Summits On The Air

Features

Declan Craig EI6FR



SOTA is an award scheme for radio amateurs that encourages portable operation in mountainous areas. SOTA has been carefully designed to make participation possible for all Radio Amateurs and Shortwave Listeners - this is not just for mountaineers! There are awards for activators (those who ascend to the summits) and chasers (who collect points for working the activated summits).

Over the last couple of years my attention has turned more and more to the SOTA program, both as a "Chaser", a station who contacts summits, earns points towards certificates and ultimately the Shack Sloth Trophy and also as an "Activator", somebody who carries radio and antennas to a hill or mountain top, gets on air to provide the Chasers with points and thereby earning his own points, again earning certificates and eventually the Mountain Goat trophy.

SOTA is a very well organised program. It has a cluster type alerting system SOTAWATCH, which tells you not only who is on a summit at the moment but also alerts for what activations will take place in the future. There is also an interesting Forum where discussions take place on all things SOTA/QRP related. An extensive mapping system is also featured.



If you would like to check out the cluster/alert system and chase a few activators to get a taste for how it works then www.sotawatch.sota.org.uk is the place to look.

Most activators will be running QRP to simple antennas so you may have to work a little for the qso but it will be enjoyable.

Having a pretty decent station and antennas at home it's been amazing to discover just what can be worked from a hilltop. My best DX so far has been in to VK from Keedean Mountain running 5 watts from an FT817ND to a simple End fed Half wave wire via a small tuner from a kit (supplied by Sotabeams, the go to supplier for all things SOTA)

After a bit, like all things ham radio related, you want to try other rigs and antennas and my SOTA kit has now grown to FT817, Elecraft KX1, SW-3B and antennas include Linked Dipoles, 4 band trapped EFHW and a couple of random wires. I also do some 2m FM using with the 817 or a Baofeng and a wire 7/8th vertical dipole.

You don't have to be an expert mountaineer to begin either as there are summits to suit every level of ability and experience from a 1 pointer that you can ramble up to in a few minutes to a 10 pointer in winter that requires navigational skills and experience in the mountains.

In the couple of years I've been involved several other EI's have appeared as regular activators and the pileup of chasers has increased a great deal.

SOTA might also be ideal if you live in a situation where installing antennas is difficult, or if your budget for hobbies is small then QRP rigs can be picked up cheaply and everything else home brewed or scrounged from the junk box.

Now that the Lockdown is relaxing we can get out and about throughout the country I would hope to hear many more EI's on the bands.



Information on all things SOTA related can be found on the homepage www.sota.org.uk where the rules and information on getting started can be found.

ISS Update

Features

Jim Holohan EI4HH



At 01:02 GMT on September 2 a cross band FM amateur radio repeater with a downlink on 437.800 MHz was activated on the International Space Station.

The Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS) announcement reads:
The ARISS team is pleased to announce that set up and installation of the first element of our next generation radio system was completed and amateur radio operations with it are now underway. This first element, dubbed the InterOperable Radio System (IORS), was installed in the International Space Station Columbus module. The IORS replaces the Ericsson radio system and packet module that were originally certified for spaceflight on July 26, 2000.

Initial operation of the new radio system is in FM cross band repeater mode using an uplink frequency of 145.990 MHz with an access tone [CTCSS] of 67 Hz and a downlink frequency of 437.800 MHz. System activation was first observed at 01:02 UTC on September 2. Special operations will continue to be announced



The IORS was launched from Kennedy Space Center on March 6, 2020 on board the SpaceX CRS-20 resupply mission. It consists of a special, space-modified JVC Kenwood D710GA transceiver, an ARISS developed multi-voltage power supply and interconnecting cables. The design, development, fabrication, testing, and launch of the first IORS was an incredible five-year engineering achievement accomplished by the ARISS hardware volunteer team. It will enable new, exciting capabilities for ham radio operators, students, and the general public. Capabilities include a higher power radio, voice repeater, digital packet radio (APRS) capabilities and a Kenwood VC-H1 slow scan television (SSTV) system.

A second IORS undergoes flight certification and will be launched later for installation in the Russian Service module. This second system enables dual, simultaneous operations, (e.g. voice repeater and

APRS packet), providing diverse opportunities for radio amateurs. It also provides on-orbit redundancy to ensure continuous operations in the event of an IORS component failure.

Next-gen development efforts continue. For the IORS, parts are being procured and a total of ten systems are being fabricated to support flight, additional flight spares, ground testing and astronaut training. Follow-on next generation radio system elements include an L-band repeater uplink capability, currently in development, and a flight Raspberry-Pi, dubbed "ARISS-Pi," that is just beginning the design phase. The ARISS-Pi promises operations autonomy and enhanced SSTV operations.

ARISS is run almost entirely by volunteers, and with the help of generous contributions from ARISS sponsors and individuals. Donations to the ARISS program for next generation hardware developments, operations, education, and administration are welcome — please go to <https://www.ariss.org/donate.html> to contribute to these efforts. ARISS—Celebrating 20 years of continuous amateur radio operations on the ISS!



International Space Station – Image Credit NASA

eSatellite Award



The eSatellite eAward has been established to provide an incentive to Amateur Radio operators around the world to make contact with other radio amateurs via as many Satellites and modes as possible. It is an award uniquely designed for satellites in that it does not reward making contacts in countries or states or provinces, but rather rewards amateurs for learning how to track and communicate through multiple satellites and different modes on these satellites. As each new satellite is launched, it becomes a potential source for one or more new credits. Thus, there is no limit to the total credits a person can earn under this eAward.

Silent Key William, "Billy" Dalton G10VLE/G17FRQ



It is with great sadness that we announce the news of the passing of one of radio's great characters: William, "Billy" Dalton G10VLE / G17FRQ (Milltown, Antrim) who became a Silent Key on 27th August 2020, aged 83 years.

Billy passed away peacefully at Lakeview Nursing Home, Crumlin, after a period of ill health in his later years (cataracts, heart bypass etc). He now rests in Gartree Parish Churchyard, near Langford Lodge in Crumlin. He spent his early years, around this area.

Up until his twilight years, Billy enjoyed an active, healthy life. Professionally, Billy worked as a self-employed building contractor. He was a hard worker, finally retiring at 78 years old. Other than his family, Billy had a great interest in radio and stationary engines. He was also really enjoyed a look around the local car boot sale on a Saturday morning.

Although not so active in recent years, Billy was heard regularly on the air.

He enjoyed a chat, in person, on the Citizens Band, his handle was "scaboo" and on amateur radio. He was a great storyteller. You always had a laugh with Billy! Billy was famous for having "no filters", and I am not referring to the radio, he just said what he thought. It



could also be said that he was infamous for some long transmissions, "overs", hence he was sometimes referred to as "Very Long Emissions"

Billy was keen on Morse code, persevering until he passed his 12 wpm Morse test. Afterwards, he helped numerous other people to learn the "code", for the test. He had a great collection of keys.

Billy regularly "called in" after the Sunday morning IRTS news to give a signal report. He was for many years a member of IRTS and attended a few AGMs.

Our Sympathy to Beryl and the family. Beryl often accompanied Billy to local Radio Rallies.

Billy will be greatly missed and fondly remembered.

Colin Williamson G10RQK

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a h-anam dílis

Silent Key Michael Clarke EI3IG

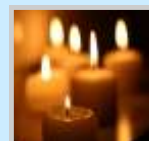
We regret to announce the death of Michael Clarke EI3IG of Castlerea, Co. Roscommon on Thursday 20th August, in Mayo University Hospital, after a short illness.



While not very active on the radio in recent years, Mick was one of the more active members in the Worked All Ireland net and was also known throughout the country through his career as a musician in the showband days particularly with the "Rhythm Stars" showband.

Mick served in the IRTS committee for three years from 1996-1998.

We extend our deepest sympathy to his cousins, relatives, neighbours and friends.



Ar dheis Dé go raibh a h-anam dílis



Silent Key Benjamin Croly EI8EQ

(Tribute by Terry Webb EI4GLB)

On the 6th July 2019 Benjy Croly, known to his radio friends as EI8EQ, sadly passed on. He was a very well known radio operator for over forty years so a lot of members would have known him. Benjy was a gentle man and a chatterbox.

I have known him since the sixties and he was one of the founding members of the South Dublin Radio Club. He was also a keen cyclist. For over twenty years he lived in Malta and I would like to express my sincere condolences to Benjy's daughters Nicky and Mairead, his sister Mabel and his extended family for their sad loss.



May he rest in peace

EI DXCC Single Band Status as at 31st August												Compiled by Joe Ryan EI7GY
Pos	Call	160	80	40	30	20	17	15	12	10	6	2
11	EI4DQ	160	80	40	30	20	17	15	12	10	6	2
10	EI2GLB	160	80	40	30	20	17	15	12	10	6	
10	EI2JD	160	80	40	30	20	17	15	12	10	6	
10	EI3I0	160	80	40	30	20	17	15	12	10	6	
10	EI6FR	160	80	40	30	20	17	15	12	10	6	
10	EI7BA	160	80	40	30	20	17	15	12	10	6	
10	EI9FBB	160	80	40	30	20	17	15	12	10	6	
9	EI6IZ	160	80	40	30	20	17	15	12	10		
9	EI8IQ		80	40	30	20	17	15	12	10	6	
9	EI8IU	160	80	40	30	20	17	15	12	10		
9	EI9JF	160	80	40	30	20	17	15	12	10		
8	EI1DG		80	40	30	20	17	15	12	10		
8	EI5GM		80	40	30	20	17	15	12	10		
8	EI7GY		80	40	30	20	17	15	12	10		
8	EI9FVB		80	40	30	20	17	15	12	10		
7	EI4BZ		80	40	30	20	17	15		10		
7	EI8GS		80	40		20	17	15	12	10		
6	EI3CTB			40	30	20	17	15		10		
6	EI7JZ			40		20	17	15	12	10		
6	EI9HX			40		20	17	15	12	10		
5	EI4CF			40		20	17	15		10		
5	EI4GJB					20	17	15	12	10		
5	EI4HH					20	17	15	12	10		
5	EI6AL					20	17	15	12	10		
5	EI6JK			40		20		15	12	10		
5	EI8JX			40	30	20	17	15				
5	EI9E		80	40		20		15		10		
5	EI9GLB					20	17	15	12	10		
3	EI4GK					20		15		10		
3	EI4GNB					20		15		10		
3	EI5EV					20		15		10		
3	EI6FM					20		15		10		
3	EI6HB					20		15		10		
3	EI7GL			40						10	6	
3	EI9CN					20	17	15				
3	EI9HQ					20		15		10		
2	EI2II					20				10		
2	EI5IF					20		15				
2	EI6GI			40		20						
2	EI7IG					20		15				
2	EI7JN					20		15				
2	EI9KF			40		20						
1	EI3EBB										6	
1	EI3HA					20						
1	EI5FQB					20						
1	EI5GSB					20						
1	EI5KO					20						
1	EI6S		80									
1	EI7BMB										6	
1	EI9CJ									10		

Entries in Bold Type show changes since 29th May 2020

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X-510N 8.3/11.7db **€149**

5.2m



X-300N	6.5/9db	€125
V-2000	2.15/6.2/8.4db	€135
X-50N	4.5/7.2db	€79
X-30N	3/5.5db	€65

Linear Heavy Duty Power Supplies

- Thermostatically controlled fan
- H/D screw terminals & convenient snap in terminals
- Short circuit & Overcurrent protection
- Two versions available, see features below



40 amp Power Supply **€159**

- Input voltage: 220/240V AC 50Hz
- Output voltage: DC 1.5-15V adjustable
- Output Current - 40 amp (max), 35 amp (30mins)
- Load Regulation - <1 %
- Protection - Current Limitation, Short Circuit
- Size: 230 x 150 x 270mm WHD
- Weight - 9kg

30 amp Power Supply **€129**

- Input voltage: 220/240V AC
- Output voltage: 3 - 15V DC adjustable
- Current: 25/30A Max.
- Noise & Ripple: 10mV RMS
- Thermostatically controlled fan
- Extra large Dual Meters
- Volt & Current metering
- Short circuit protection
- Size: 230 x 150 x 270mm WHD
- Weight: 8.58kg